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A

DISSENT

FROM THE

CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,

Fully juſtified:

And proved the genuine and juſt Conſequence of the

Allegiance due to *CHRIST*,

The only LAWGIVER in the CHURCH.

BEING

The DISSENTING GENTLEMAN's

THREE

LETTERS and POSTSCRIPT,

In Anſwer to

Mr. *JOHN WHITE*'s on that Subject.

Micaiah Towgood

The FOURTH EDITION.

DUBLIN:

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MDCCLXVI.

THE

PREFACE.

THE Gentleman to whom these Letters are addressed, having called us forth to a vindication of our *religious* principles and practice; we think ourselves happy that without fear of the heavy fines, imprisonments and deaths, which our Forefathers suffered, we can make our Defence.

A calm and unprejudiced examination of our cause is all the favour we ask. Such an examination, we are humbly confident, will shew ——That we separate from the Church of *England* in no one thing, but in which she separates herself from the Church of JESUS CHRIST—That we are *Non-conformists* to the Establishment only in those points in which the Establishment is *not conformed* to the primitive apostolic plan of discipline and worship established in the *word of* GOD—And that would the Governors of this Church be pleased to lay aside those things which they themselves *know* and *acknowledge* to be no parts at all of genuine, original, real *Christianity*; and to be but *the devices* of fallible and weak men; the difference would be no more; our separation would at once vanish; we should immediately *join together, with one heart and one mouth giving glory to* GOD.

Here we rest our cause; upon *that* which is the grand basis of *Protestantism*, and of all rational

onal and reformed Religion; viz. *That the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and of manners:* Whoever departs from this, must wander into endless mazes of *Church Tyranny* and *Superstition*; till he plunges at last into that horrid abyss of both, POPERY, or the *Church of* ROME.

To every impartial judge our *dissent* from the Church of *England* will appear, nothing but a protest which we publickly make against *A new Scheme of* CHRISTIANITY, which our brethren of the Establishment have taken upon them to set forth. We are content with the old, the primitive, plan of doctrines and rites which CHRIST and his *Apostles* established in the Church: Our brethren are not; they are for altering, improving upon, and mending CHRIST's scheme: For embellishing and adorning it with some *additional splendors*; and for making *new terms* of Christian communion besides those which CHRIST made: In this we differ from them: And *this* (we pray it may be noted) *this* is the only point in difference betwixt us. Here the merits rest. Which of us have TRUTH and RIGHT of our side we readily submit to every unbiassed judgment: Yea, we are even bold to submit it to the *conscience* and the *sedate reflections* of our brethren themselves.

May the GOD *of* TRUTH judge betwixt us! We are assured he will judge. To him alone be the glory of dominion over conscience, and of all authority in religion; throughout all Churches, and all ages. Amen.

THE

THE

DISSENTING GENTLEMAN's

ANSWER

To the REVEREND

Mr. *WHITE*'s Three Letters, &c.

SIR,

A Debate of this kind I ſhould not have *choſe* in the preſent Situation of our publick Affairs: But as you have done me the Honour of publickly addreſſing to me *three* long Letters for my Conviction and Edification, Gratitude and good Manners *conſtrain* me to anſwer.

As *worldly* Conſiderations are very ſtrong on your Side, I aſſure you, I have an Ear *always open* to any thing that can ſhew Conformity to be my Duty. *Diſſenters* are not Men of ſo peculiar a Turn of Mind, as to love Suffering and Reproach, or to deſpiſe the Dignities, Preferments, and lucrative Poſts, to the amount of *Millions* a Year, which are ſhared amongſt their Fellow-ſubjects, could they with a good Conſcience partake of them, as they have a *natural Right* to do.

But, notwithſtanding this Prejudice in Favour of your Argument, and all the Ingenuity with which you ſet it off, I cannot ſay it has wrought in me the Conviction you ſeemed to hope. So far, Sir, from this, that the more carefully I examine the Grounds of my *Separation*, the more thoroughly I am convinced of its Lawfulneſs and Ex-

pedience: that, 'tis a *Debt* I owe to GOD, to *Liberty*, to *Truth*, and an Act of Homage and Allegiance due to CHRIST, the *only* Law-giver and King in the Church.

I shall not enter upon the Enquiry, on which you largely expatiate, who are the *best Livers*, Churchmen or Dissenters? And amongst which the best Means for *holy Living* are found? Let the World judge betwixt us. Would to GOD that both of us had greater Reason to boast!

The Controversy betwixt us, Sir, I apprehend may easily be brought to a *plain* and *short* Issue, if you will heartily join in it. It turns upon the *single Point* of the XXth Article of your Church, *viz. That* THE CHURCH *hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Matters of Faith.* For if THE CHURCH hath *really* this Authority and Power, then all Objections of the Dissenters about Sponsors, the Cross in Baptism, kneeling at the Lord's-supper, and every other Thing, are impertinent and vain: *The Church* having this *Authority*, ought reverently to be obeyed. And, if instead of two or three Ceremonies, it had enjoined two or three score; and if to the *thirty-nine Articles* it had added an hundred besides, we ought meekly to have bowed down to her *spiritual Jurisdiction*, and to have practised and believed as *the Church* hath taught and enjoined.

But, if on the contrary, Sir, *the Church* hath really and in Truth, NO *Power at all*, nor *Authority* of this kind; yea, if CHRIST, the great *Lawgiver* and *King* of the Church hath expressly commanded that NO POWER of this kind shall ever be *claimed*, or ever be *yielded*, by any of his Followers, then *your Church* is reprehensible and highly criminal before GOD, for usurping *this Power:* And then the *Dissenters* are justified, and will have Honour before GOD, for entering their Protest against such *Usurpation*; for asserting the Rights

and

and Privileges of the Chriſtian Church; and *ſtanding faſt in the Liberty wherewith* CHRIST *has made them free.*

Our *Separation* from the Eſtabliſhment you are pleaſed to repreſent in very terrifying and black Colours, as a Sin of near the firſt Magnitude—"Our Miniſters, you ſay, have Guilt lying heavily upon them on Account of their ſchiſmatical and uncatholick Proceedings.—They are "notoriouſly peccant (*i. e.* are great Sinners) in "throwing off the Authority of thoſe whom they "ought to obey and ſubmit themſelves to.—Their "Conduct is ſuch as you challenge all the Wit "and Ingenuity of the Nation ever to reconcile "with *holy Living*——You repreſent them as carnal, evil, and deceitful Workers, diſorderly "Walkers, whom GOD will, undoubtedly, for "theſe things, bring into Judgment*; and *the "Faithful*, far from being permitted to enter into "any *paſtoral Relation* to them, are not permitted "to have any *Chriſtian Communion* with them; "no, not ſo much as any *intimate* unneceſſary "Acquaintance and Familiarity with them in "common Life †;" with much more to the ſame Purpoſe.

You ſpeak alſo "of the *Lay-diſſenter*, as having "ſtained his Soul with Guilt ‡; and of the Doctrine on which our Separation is built, as being "*falſe* and *dangerous* ‖. This you wiſh me to lay "to Heart, and ſeriouſly to conſider."

I have, according to your Wiſh, Sir, *lain it to Heart*, and *ſeriouſly conſidered.* The Reſult of my Conſideration I ſhall now freely give you; and in return heartily wiſh, that laying aſide all Prejudice and *worldly Attachments*, you would impartially conſider——What is the true Nature and Conſtitution of the *Chriſtian Church*; and what

* Letter I. Page 82, 83.
† Letter II. Page 8.
‡ Letter II. Page 26.
‖ Letter III. Page 59.

the Allegiance, which, as a Subject of JESUS CHRIST, you owe to HIM the *only* Law-giver and King in the Church; who will shortly call you to Account for your Conduct in this Respect.

To come then to the Point—THE CHURCH, you say, and solemnly subscribe it, *hath Power to decree Rites, and Authority in Matters of Faith.* This is the grand Hinge upon which the whole Controversy turns. Now here, Sir, let me ask you,

FIRST, *What* CHURCH is it, to whom this Authority and Power is given? You will, doubtless, say, the *Church of England*; for the *Church of England* expressly claims and exercises this Power; and you *avow* and *defend* it in this Exercise and Claim: Yea, this is the *very Basis* on which its whole Frame and Hierarchy stand. It obliges all its Ministers to subscribe to *Articles of Faith*, which it hath *authoritatively* decreed; and to use in religious Worship *Ceremonies* and *Rites*, which it hath *authoritatively* enjoined.

But mind, Sir, I beseech you, the Consequences of this Claim. If the *Church of England* hath really this Authority and Power; hath not the *Church of France*—the *Church of Spain*—the *Church of Rome* the very same? Hath *England*, in this Matter, any Privilege from GOD, any spiritual Prerogative, any Charter from Heaven, which its *neighbour Countries* have not? You will not pretend it has. But if it has *no* Privilege nor Prerogative of this kind, then the *Church of France*, and the *Church of Rome* have also, you acknowlege, POWER *to decree Rites and Ceremonies in* GOD's *Worship*, and AUTHORITY *in Points of Faith*; consequently, all the Fopperies and Superstitions of the *Romish Church*, at least, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Word of GOD, are to be reverently submitted to by all the Members of that Church, and cordially received.

But

But will not your claiming this Power for the *Church* abſolutely overthrow the *Reformation* itſelf, and ſubvert the *very Foundation* of the Church you ſeek to eſtabliſh? For till you can ſhew, why the *Church of England* is poſſeſſed of this Power, but not the *Church of Rome*; why a Body of acknowleged fallible Men in *Britain* have Authority to make and to enjoin Articles of Faith, but not a Body of pretended infallible Men at *Trent*; whence ENGLAND came thus ſpiritually-gifted, and endowed beyond all its *neighbour Kingdoms*—your Separation from the *Church of Rome* is incapable of a juſt and ſolid Defence.

To this, perhaps, you will reply—But *our Church* hath expreſly guarded againſt any ſuch *Abuſe* of the Power it claims, by adding in the XXth Article—*Yet is it not lawful for the Church to ordain any Thing that is contrary to* GOD'*s Word written*; *neither may it ſo expound one Place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.* But, upon this I entreat your Patience for theſe two Remarks:

1ſt, Whatever *Ceremony* or *Rite* then cannot be ſhewn to be CONTRARY to GOD'*s Word*, your Church, yea, the *Church of Rome* hath, you acknowlege, full Authority to enjoin: Conſequently, as *your Church*, by Virtue of this Authority, hath enjoined the *Croſs in Baptiſm*, it hath *full Power* alſo to require you to *croſs yourſelves*, whenever you enter the Place of Worſhip, ſay your Prayers, look towards the Eaſt, touch the Bible, ſit at Meat—It hath *full Power* to enjoin the Uſe of *Salt* and *Spittle* in *Baptiſm*, *Chriſm*, *extreme Unction*, and an hundred other Things which are no more *contrary* to GOD'*s Word* than the Croſs in Baptiſm is.

As your Church now *conſecrates Ground*, it has every whit as much *Power* to conſecrate the *other Element*, and to make *holy Water*, as well as *holy Earth*; and to order it to be decently ſprinkled upon

upon its Members (*for all Things*, you know, *are to be done decently and in Order*) in Token that they ſhall keep themſelves pure from Sin: It hath *Power* to conſecrate *holy Knives* to cut the ſacramental Bread; holy *Baſons* and *Ewers* for the Prieſts to waſh in before the Sacrament, *holy Veſtments and Robes*, and a great Variety of *holy Utenſils*, lighted *Tapers* for the Altar, *&c.* (all which, you know, Sir, was done by your admired Biſhop *Laud)* knocking on the Breaſt, bowing towards the Eaſt, Proſtration before the Altar.—All theſe, I ſay, and innumerable other Ceremonies *your Church* claims *Authority* and *Power* to enjoin; for none of theſe can be ſhewn to be more *contrary to the Word of* GOD, or to be a whit more ſuperſtitious, ridiculous, or abſurd, than the *croſſing* at Baptiſm, or the *ſolemn Conſecration* of Churches and their Yards. But,

2dly. The *Limitation* or *Guard*, which the Article ſeems to put upon *this Power* of the Church, is really of no Force, and amounts to nothing at all.

For tho' it ſays—That the Church *may not ordain any Thing* CONTRARY to GOD's *Word*, *nor ſo expound one Scripture as to be* REPUGNANT *to another:* Yet of this *Repugnance* and *Contrariety*, the CHURCH *alone*, you will obſerve, and not every *private Perſon*, is allowed to be the proper *Judge:* For elſe the Article is abſurd; it actually overthrows itſelf; and takes away, with one Hand, what it gives with the other. For, if every *private Perſon* hath Authority to *judge* of the Church's Deciſions, and to *reject* them, if they appear to him repugnant to Scripture, then the *Church's Authority* in Points of Faith comes to juſt nothing at all. It is an Authority to decree, where none are bound to ſubmit; that is, an Authority over no Body, an Authority to do nothing. But ſuch a ſenſeleſs, unmeaning, impertinent Claim, can never

never be the Design and Import of *this Article*. It does claim therefore for the Church some *real Authority* to settle Points of Faith; consequently, to Points thus *authoritatively* settled by it, private Christians, its Members are, reverently to submit, even tho' to their own Judgments they appear repugnant to the Word of GOD.

This, Sir, must be the real Meaning and Intent of the Article, notwithstanding the *restrictive Clause*. Accordingly, in Consequence of this Claim, your Church hath *authoritatively* decreed *thirty-nine* Articles of Faith; and these it declares to have decreed *for the taking away Difference of Opinion, and to establish an Agreement in true Religion**. The plain Language of *Authority*. These Articles it obliges all its Ministers to subscribe; and our *Princes*, as Heads and Governors of the *Church*, have authoritatively forbid its Clergy to preach any Thing repugnant to them, and required them to frame their Sermons according to *the Plan* here prescribed. From all which it appears, that, notwithstanding the *pretended Limitation*, there is a *real Authority* claimed by the Church, that is to say, by its *Governors*, to settle Points of Faith. But if there be *such Authority* really vested in them, then the People are bound to *submit* to their Decisions, and have no Right of private Judgment to *examine* or *reject* them; for there cannot be *two* CONTRADICTORY *Rights*; a *Right* in Governors to prescribe, and a *Right* in Subjects to refuse.——But if the *Church of England* has really this Authority and Right, the *Church of Rome* had it before her; and, as the elder and *Mother-church*, ought to have been obeyed. The *Reformation*, therefore, as we are wont to call it, was a Rebellion against Superiors, a Disobedience to the Authority vested in *the Church*, and ought, as

* Preface to XXXIX Articles.

as ſuch, to be renounced by returning to the *Church of Rome.*

In this Manner, Sir, a *Romiſh Prieſt* will turn upon the *Church of England* its own dangerous Artillery; and by the meer Conceſſions of this XXth Article, thouſands of Proſelytes have, no doubt, been gained from you. Nor, with all your Ingenuity, would you find it eaſy to ward off the Force of ſuch Arguing, ſhould any of your Pariſhioners be likely to be ſeduced. And this, perhaps, is the Reaſon why the numerous Converts theſe Prieſts are ſaid to make, are gathered *all* from *your Church*; whereas, from amongſt the *Diſſenters*, you hardly ever hear of one gained. But,

SECONDLY. I want much to be enlightened as to THE PERSONS who are inveſted with *this Authority* and *Power*.

You ſay, it is *the Church*: But *Who*, I pray, are *the Church*, in whom this great *Power* is lodged? You will pleaſe to obſerve well, Sir, not the *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, who are wont to ſpeak of themſelves as our *ſpiritual Paſtors and Guides*, as being *over us in the Lord*, as *Stewards of the Myſteries*, &c. This *Power* to order the Manner of GOD's Worſhip, and to ſettle Articles of Faith, is *not* at all lodged in *them*, but entirely in the KING and PARLIAMENT of theſe Realms.

You need not be informed, Sir, that *all the Clergy* of this Kingdom, with *all the Biſhops*, at their Head, have not the leaſt *Authority* to enjoin one Ceremony or Rite of Worſhip; or to either *eſtabliſh* or annul one Article of Faith. No, but *all* Power and Juriſdiction relating to theſe Matters is lodged chiefly in *Lay-hands*; 'tis ſolely in the KING and PARLIAMENT, and *the Clergy* are to act in all Things under *their* Direction and Controul. The KING and PARLIAMENT are in Truth the real *Fathers*, *Governors*, or BISHOPS of this Church:

Theſe

Theſe ONLY have Power to make or to unmake Forms and Rites of Worſhip, and do *authoritatively* inſtruct and preſcribe to *the Clergy* what they are to believe—in what Manner, and to whom the Sacraments are to be given—what Prayers they are to offer up—what Doctrines to preach—who are to be admitted to the *Epiſcopate* or *Prieſthood*, and who to be refuſed—by what Ceremonies and Prayers, and Exhortations they are to be ſet apart, and conſecrated to their Office.——Theſe, with every other Circumſtance relating to Religion and the Worſhip of GOD, which is *authoritatively* preſcribed or enjoined in *your Church*, you know, Sir, not the *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, but the KING with *his Parliament* are the ONLY *Perſons* who have *authoritatively* enjoined and preſcribed them.

" The *Clergy* of the whole Land, in Convocation " aſſembled, cannot ſo much as attempt any Canons " or Conſtitutions without the King's Licence. If " the King and Clergy make a Canon, tho' it binds " the Clergy *in re eccleſiaſtica*, yet it does not bind " Laymen*."

Yea, ſo far, Sir, were the *Biſhops* and *Clergy* from having any Hand in the firſt forming our preſent eſtabliſhed Church, or in ordering its Rites and Articles of Faith, that it was done not only *without*, but in *actual Oppoſition* to them: " For in the 1ſt of

* *Vide* Examination of the Codex, &c. Pag. 114, 148. " By " the 25th of Hen. VIII. Cap. 19. it is a *Præmunire* for the " Convocation to meet without the *King*'s Writ: And when they " are met to do any thing without the *King*'s Licence: And " then no Reſolution of theirs to have the Force of a *Canon*, un- " leſs the *King* confirm it. Nor is it then valid, if it be contra- " rient or repugnant to the Laws, Statues, and Cuſtoms of this " Realm, or be to the Damage or Hurt of the *King*'s Prerogative royal—And of this the Courts of *Weſtminſter Hall* muſt " judge——*Hale*, in his Analyſis (*Page* 12.) ſays, If eccleſiaſtical Laws are not confirmed by *Parliament*, the *King* may re- " voke and annul them at his Will and Pleaſure."—*Vide* Notes on an Anſwer to the Examination of the Biſhop of *London*'s *Codex*.

" Q. *Eliz.* the *Parliament alone* eſtabliſhed the " Queen's Supremacy and the Common-prayer- " book, in ſpite of all Oppoſition from the *Biſhops* " in the Houſe of Lords; and *the Convocation* then " ſitting, were ſo far from having any Hand in " thoſe Church-acts for Reformation, that they " preſented to the Parliament ſeveral Propoſitions " in Behalf of the Tenets of *Popery*, directly con- " trary to the Proceedings of the Parliament*."—

Hence then, Sir, I think you muſt be abſolutely forced to own (what I know Gentlemen of your Robe don't care to hear) *viz.* That the *Church of England* is really a PARLIAMENTARY *Church*; that it is not properly an *Ally*, but a mere *Creature* of the State. It depends entirely upon the *Acts* and *Authority of* PARLIAMENT for its very Eſſence and Frame. The Qualifications of its Miniſters, their Power to officiate, the Manner in which they are to adminiſter the Sacraments, are all limited and preſcribed by *Authority of Parliament*, and this *Authority*, which at firſt made, can *alone* alter and new-make it; can aboliſh, or add to its Articles or Rites, according to its Pleaſure, even tho' the whole Body of *Biſhops* and *Clergy* ever ſo much diſlike, or proteſt earneſtly againſt it.

It is a Point therefore *inconteſtible*, and abſolutely out of Doubt, that THE CHURCH, your Article declares to have *this Authority* and *Power* here, is the KING *and* PARLIAMENT of theſe Realms; and it is *no other* than they. But,

THIRDLY. The grand Point which yet ſticks, and which, without your Aſſiſtance, I ſhall never get over, is, how came the *civil Magiſtrate* by this Authority in the *Church of* CHRIST? Who gave *him* this Power to decree Rites in Chriſtian Worſhip, which *Chriſt* never decreed; and to make Articles of Faith which *Chriſt* never made? Neither CHRIST, nor

* *Vide* Prieſtcraft in Perfection, Pref. Pag. 4.

nor *the Apoſtles*, ever gave him this Authority; whence then is it derived?

The *Subjection to higher Powers, and Obedience to Magiſtrates*, which the Scriptures enjoin *Chriſtians*, relates *only* to *civil*, not at all to *religious* Matters: For this obvious Reaſon; that the *Magiſtrate* at that Time was every where *Pagan*. The Apoſtles therefore inſtead of paying, or exhorting Chriſtians to pay, any Subjection to him in *religious Affairs*, ſtrenuouſly exhorted them to renounce and diſavow it—*to come out from among them and be ſeparate*. They were every where, you know, Sir, *Diſſenters* from the *eſtabliſhed Church*.

CHRISTIANITY is ſo far from enjoining, that it actually forbids, Obedience to *civil Governors* in Things of a *religious* Nature. It commands us to *call no Man upon Earth Father or Maſter**, *i. e.* to acknowlege no Authority or Juriſdiction of *any* in Matters of Religion, but to remember that ONE, *one only is our Maſter* and Law-giver, *even* CHRIST; and all Chriſtians *are Brethren*; *i. e.* ſtand upon an equal foot, having no Dominion over one another. Tho' *the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe Dominion over them, and they who are Great exerciſe Authority upon them, yet it ſhall not*, our LORD ſays, *be ſo amongſt you* †. Nay but *your Church* replies, in this its XXth Article, *it ſhall be ſo amongſt us*.—There are ſome who have *Authority over others* in Matters of Faith. —There are *other Maſters* beſides CHRIST. Thus the *Article* and *the Scripture* manifeſtly claſh: Will you be ſo good Sir, as to adjuſt the Controverſy betwixt them, and tell me which I am to follow.

The Church is CHRIST's Kingdom, *a Kingdom not of this World:* For his voluntary Humiliation and ſuffering of Death, he is advanced to the high Honour of being *ſole* Law-giver, Judge and Sovereign in religious Matters.—*He* only hath Authority to fix the *Terms of Communion* for his Followers or Church;

* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9. † Matt. xx. 25.

and the Terms which *He* hath fix'd, no Man upon Earth, nor Body of Men, have Authority to ſet aſide, to alter or new make. And if any Men upon Earth ſhall preſume to alter, or new make, *Terms of Communion* in his Church; they are guilty of great Arrogance, and invade his Authority and Throne. But this, we apprehend, is what *you* have done. You will not now receive a Perſon to publick Baptiſm or the Lord's-Supper upon *the Terms* on which CHRIST and *his Apoſtles* would have received him. Neither CHRIST nor *his Apoſtles* ever made the *Sign of the Croſs*, or *other Sponſors* beſides the Parents, neceſſary to a Child's Baptiſm; nor did they ever make *kneeling* a neceſſary Term of receiving the Sacramental-Supper; but both thoſe *you* make neceſſary*. Thus you have taken upon you to *new model* the Church of CHRIST, to change and ſet aſide *his* Laws, and to make *others* in their room.

Now give me leave to aſk you, Sir, by what Authority do you preſume to reject thoſe from *your* Church, whom in your Conſcience you believe CHRIST and *his Apoſtles* would have received into theirs? Are *you* wiſer than *they?* Or is *your* Church better framed, and more perfect than *theirs?* If an honeſt and ſincere Chriſtian now brings his Child to you to be publickly baptized, deſiring it may be done *without* the Sign of the Croſs, and that *himſelf* may ſtand forth as *Surety* for its Education; would you not *refuſe* him? Or if he deſired to be admitted to the Communion of Chriſtians, in the other Sacrament of the Supper, but that he might not take it *Kneeling:* Would you not *reject* him? But if the ſame Perſon had come to JESUS CHRIST or

* The XXVIIth *Canon* requires, the Miniſter never wittingly to adminiſter the Communion to any, but to ſuch as kneel. The XXIXth *Canon* requires, that no Parent ſhall be urged to be preſent at his Child's Baptiſm; nor be admitted to anſwer as Godfather for his own Child.

or the *Apoſtles*, offering himſelf and Child upon the *ſame Terms*, would they not have *received* him? But how is it, Sir, that you take upon you to *reject* from CHRIST's Family and Church, thoſe whom you believe HIMSELF would have *received?* is not this *Lording it over* GOD's Heritage, and uſurping CHRIST's Throne? Is it not ſetting yourſelves up for *Law-Makers* and *Rulers* in his Kingdom; claiming Homage from *his* Subjects? And are not his *faithful* Subjects, by the Allegiance they owe HIM, obliged to enter their Proteſt againſt ſuch Uſurpation, and to *ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith* CHRIST *has ſet them free?*

Where then, let me appeal to your own ſober Judgment, does the *Guilt of Schiſm* lie: Upon *you* or upon *us?* Upon *us*, who offer our ſelves *to Communion* in your Church upon *the Terms* which CHRIST appointed, and are ready to do *every Thing* which CHRIST has commanded: Or upon *you* who abſolutely *reject us*, unleſs, beſides what CHRIST hath order'd, we will ſubmit alſo to ſome Orders and Devices of *your own?* We come as the *Lord's Servants*, and deſire to eat at the *Lord's-Table*, with reverent Submiſſion to all *his* Appointments. Nay but, ſay you, you ſhall not come to the *Lord's-Table*, unleſs you will *kneel*; *i. e.* unleſs you will come in that Poſture, which tho' CHRIST in *his* Wiſdom did not think proper, yet which WE in *our* Wiſdom have thought proper *to ordain.* In other Words; unleſs beſides being CHRIST's *Servants*, you will alſo be ours; and pay Subjection to *our* Inſtitution and Authority in this religious Rite.

This, Sir, is the true State of the Controverſy betwixt us: Judge now, I pray you, with the Impartiality of a *Chriſtian who* makes *the Schiſm*, and *who* has reaſon to fear *being brought into Judgment*, by the great *Law-giver* of the Church, for the unhappy Breach which ſubſiſts.—Let a *great Prelate* who at preſent adorns one of the higheſt Stations of

your

your Church be heard as *Judge* betwixt us.—"In all "other Societies, the *expreſs* Will of the *Founder*, "and the Terms of Fellowſhip and Communion "which *he* has laid down, are accounted *ſacred*. In "all other Kingdoms the *Will* of the *ſupreme Power* "is a *Law*. No one pretends, or dares pretend, "to make Laws of equal Force with his. How "hard then is the Fate of the *Chriſtian Church*, or "of the *Kingdom of* CHRIST, when *his* Will is de-"clared *inſufficient*, and the *invented Words* and *De-"ciſions* of his Subjects are made co-ordinate with his "own, equally excluſive of others of his Subjects "from the *Communion* of their Fellow-Subjects! And "how hard is the Fate of thoſe *Believers* in *him*, who "*deſire Communion upon the Terms* GOD *has preſcribed*, "to be excluded by the Words of Men; by the In-"ventions of Men impoſed upon them for *his Pre-"cepts!* And, how unhappy is the *Church*, to be re-"duced by any ſuch Methods within *more narrow* "*Bounds* than *our* LORD *himſelf has confined it* *."

But you are in Readineſs to *retort*, and with great Aſſurance tell me, "That the *Avoidance* of Kneel-"ing *inſiſted upon* by our Miniſters, is not leſs an "Impoſition than your enjoining it.—That we do "really *impoſe* the Obſervance of *one particular Geſ-"ture* upon our Communicants.—That *ſitting* is "the regular, unvaried Practice of our Churches; "obſerved as conſtantly and univerſally amongſt "us, as *Kneeling* is amongſt you,—*never allowed* to "be departed from; which our Miniſters *require*, "*inſiſt upon*, and *refuſe to abate*."——And you aſk me "if one ſhould preſent himſelf to take the Sa-"crament ſtanding, or offer to take it on his Knees, "whether I don't think he would undergo ſome "ſevere Expoſtulations, and be plainly told, we "had

* Biſhop of *Winchester*'s Poſtſcript to his Anſwer to Dr. *Hare*'s Sermon, page 254.

" had no *ſuch Cuſtom*, *nor the Churches of* GOD, and " it would not be given him at all*."

I believe the World will be ſurprized, Sir, and that an *ingenuous Bluſh* will cover your own Face, when you find that this Account of us is abſolutely without Truth, and quite contrary to Fact. I have ſpent my whole Life amongſt *the Diſſenters*, and am acquainted with a great Number of their Churches and Miniſters; but never once, till now, heard that SITTING at the Lord's-Table was ever *inſiſted on* as a Term of Communion with them; or that it is their *unvaried* and *univerſal* Practice. The contrary to this, I know to be Truth. In the Church to which I myſelf belong, there is a Perſon who for many Years has conſtantly received KNEELING, without the leaſt Offence to the Congregation, or any Expoſtulation from the Miniſter on that Account. In ſome of our Churches I am well informed, there are ſome who receive *Standing*, ſome *Kneeling:* In this every one amongſt us is left entirely at his Liberty. Tho' the Poſture of *Sitting* be generally thought by us moſt ſuitable to the *Commemorative-Supper* of our LORD; inſtituted inſtead of the *Paſchal-Supper* of the *Jews*; and moſt agreeable to the Practice of CHRIST and his *Apoſtles*, who, without all peradventure, *Sat* around the Table; yet in this we are all left to follow freely our own Perſuaſion. Nor is there, I believe, amongſt our Miniſters one in five hundred, who would refuſe to give the Sacrament either *Standing* or *Kneeling* to any one who thought *either of theſe* the fitteſt Poſture of receiving. Our *Liberty* as to this Matter you might have ſeen in *Baxter's reform'd Liturgy*; where it is expreſly ſaid—" *And let none of the Peo-* " *ple be forced to ſit, ſtand or kneel in the Act of re-* " *ceiving, whoſe Judgment is againſt it.*" And in Dr. *Calamy*'s brief Account, *&c.* which you appear to have read——" *The Communicants amongſt* Proteſ-

" tant

* Letter II. pag. 56, 57, 58. Letter III. pag. 8, 9.

" tant Diſſenters, *are* AT LIBERTY *to uſe* THEIR " OWN POSTURE *in the Time of Receiving*; *tho' a* " *Table Geſture is moſt commmonly uſed**."

Thus, Sir, I have at large conſidered your Charge of SCHISM upon *the Diſſenters*; and hope by this time you begin to think more favourably of us; and to *juſtify* our Principles as truly *Catholic* and *Generous*; the only *Broad-Bottom* on which the Peace of the Church can be ſolidly fixed; and that *the Guilt* of the Separation lies wholly on *your Church*, which inſiſts upon UNCHRISTIAN and UNSCRIPTURAL *Terms* of communicating with it.

But I hope to finiſh your Conviction, Sir, and to wipe off every Speck of the Taint of Schiſm from *Diſſenters*, by calling to your Remembrance your own excellent Definition of the *Catholic* or *Chriſtian Church*; and reaſoning with you on it. " The *Ca-* " *tholic Church*, you ſay†, *is one outward and viſi-* " *ble Society* DIVINELY *inſtituted*; *the moſt admira-* " *ble and glorious Society under Heaven.*"——Mind, Sir, your own Words; and it will ſoon end the Debate. If it be a *Society* DIVINELY *inſtituted*, then whatever *Society* is not of *Divine*, but of *meerly human* Inſtitution, is not the *Church of Chriſt*. If it be a Society *divinely inſtituted*, then the *Terms of Admiſſion* into this Society, and the *Qualifications* of its Members are *divinely fixed*, *i. e.* fixed by the Will and Authority of GOD: Whatever *viſible Society* then hath its *Terms of Admiſſion* and the Qualifications of its Members NOT *divinely fix'd*, fix'd only by the Will and Authority of Men, cannot be the truly *Catholic* and *Chriſtian* Church.

Now here ſhall I intreat you, Sir, with the Impartiality of *a Chriſtian*, who has nothing but *Truth* and the *Will of God* in view, to ſtop a Moment and compare the CONSTITUTION of the *Church of England*, and the CONSTITUTION of the *Church of Chriſt*, and

* Letter to a Divine in *Germany*, pag. 11.

† Letter. I. pag 73.

and ſee if they are not Societies of a quite *different Frame*; the one a *human*, the other a *divine* Inſtitution; the one reſting entirely on the Authority and Will of *Men*, the other upon the Will and Authority of *GOD*.

If you enquire after the Conſtitution and Frame of the *Church of Chriſt*, where muſt you look for it? only in the *Bible**. But if you enquire after the Conſtitution and Frame of the *Church of England*, where muſt you look for that? in the *Statute-book*, in the *Canons*, and *Common-prayer-book*, and in the *Codes* of the *Engliſh-law*.

The Church of CHRIST is a *religious* Eſtabliſhment, founded upon *the Scriptures*, as the only authentic Rule of its Doctrines and Worſhip; the Church of ENGLAND is a *civil* Eſtabliſhment, founded upon *Acts of Parliament*, as the only authentic Rule of what is to be believed and practiſed therein. The one a *ſpiritual Structure*, built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST himſelf being the chief Corner-ſtone: The other a *political Structure*, built upon the Foundation of the Lords and Commons of the Realm, THE KING, as ſupreme Head, being the chief Corner-ſtone.

Into the *Church of Chriſt* any Perſon may be admitted, who ſubmits to *the Terms* appointed by *Chriſt:* But, into the *Church of England*, he cannot be admitted, except over and above *theſe*, he ſubmits alſo to the Terms which *human Authority* hath inſtituted and deviſed.

In *Chriſt's Church* the Lord's-Supper is appointed and uſed ONLY for *ſpiritual* and *religious* Ends; but, in the *Church of England*, it is notoriouſly both inſtituted and uſed for *political* and *worldly Ends*, to qualify for a Poſt. In the *former* 'twas appointed with Intention, and as *a mean* of *uniting* all Chriſtians; and of deſtroying all Variance and Diſtinctions

* *The Bible* only is the Religion of Proteſtants. *Chillingworth*

betwixt them. In the *latter* 'tis appointed with Intention, and as a *Mean*, of *diſcriminating* and *dividing* Chriſtians; and of making a *Diſtinction* betwixt one and another.

In the *Chriſtian Church*, no openly debauched or ſcandalouſly wicked Perſon has a *Right* to come to the Table of the Lord, or to partake for its Proviſions; but in the *Church of England*, if ſuch a Perſon has a Commiſſion from the King in the Army or the Fleet, or any profitable Poſt, this gives him *a Right* to come to the Communion-Table, *a Right* to demand the holy Elements at the *Prieſt's Hands*, as a Qualification for his Poſt.

In the *ſcriptural* Church of Chriſt, there are no ſuch Officers ever heard of as *Archbiſhops*, *Deans*, *Archdeacons*, *Prebendaries*, *Canons*, *Chancellors*, &c.— But there is *another Church*, you know, Sir, where *theſe* are Officers of great Influence, of high Importance and Rank. But whence came this pompous Train! From the *apoſtolick* Fountain at *Jeruſalem*, or from the *corrupted* Source at *Rome?*

The *Church of Chriſt* never excommunicates, nor pretends to exerciſe its Diſcipline upon any but its own Members; *For what have I to do*, the Apoſtle ſays, *to judge them that are without*?* But the *Church of England* extends its eccleſiaſtical Authority over thoſe who never belonged to it; and by a very extraordinary Act of Power, *excommunicates* ſuch as *never were* of its *Communion*; that is, it caſts ſuch *from*, who never were *in* it. In common Life ſuch a Thing would be reckoned *marvellous* indeed. Should I ſolemnly threaten, yea actually proceed to caſt a Perſon *out* of my Houſe, who never was *in it*, I ſhould work as great a Miracle as was ever wrought in the *Church of Rome:* But Miracles of this kind, Sir, your Church, you know, ſometimes works.

Again

* 1 Cor. v. 12.

Again; the Rod with which the *Church of Chriſt* chaſtiſes its Delinquents is *ſpiritual*, not *carnal*; but the Rod of the *Church of England* is *carnal*, not *ſpiritual*. By the Conſtitution of the *former*, the excommunicated Member is only to be deprived of *ſpiritual* Privileges, ſuch as Fellowſhip in Prayer, Singing, Sacraments, *&c.* As for this civil Property and Rights, it meddles not with theſe; *for* CHRIST's *Kingdom is not of this World*; but by the Conſtitution of the *latter*, the excommunicated Member is delivered over to the *civil Arm*, to humble and chaſtiſe him; he is diſabled from aſſerting his natural Rights, from being a Witneſs, from bringing Actions at Law, and if he does not ſubmit in *forty Days*, a Writ ſhall iſſue forth to *impriſon him.*—

In the *Church of Jeſus Chriſt*, thoſe who are entruſted with eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline are ſolemnly *charged before* GOD, *and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels*, to be no Reſpecters of Perſons, *to do nothing by Partiality, and not to prefer one before another*:* Neither *the Gold Ring* nor *the gay Cloathing*†, nor pecuniary Gifts, are to have any Influence upon their *eccleſiaſtical* Proceedings; but the Poor are to receive the ſame Meaſure with the Rich. But is it thus, Sir, in the *Church of England?* May not a grievous Sinner, according to her Conſtitution, be ſuffered to *commute?* to have Pardon for Money, and to ſkreen himſelf by a round Fee from the Stroke of the Church's Rod? Yea, when he is going to be delivered, or actually is delivered, into the Hands of *the Devil*, and *Satan* has him in his Keeping, will not an *handſome Sum* preſently pluck him thence, and reſtore him to the Church's ſoft and indulgent Boſom again?—You remember, Sir, the Heathen Satyriſt,

——————— *At vos*
Dicite Pontifices, in Sacris quid facit Aurum.
Perſius Sat. II.

And you know what was ſaid, upon a like Occaſi-

* 1 Tim. v. 21. † James ii. 2, 3.

on, by a much greater than he—*Thy Money perish with thee; because thou hast thought that the Gift of God* (Pardon and Absolution) *may be purchased with Money, thou hast neither Part nor Lot in this Matter**.

Some of the most *sacred* Acts of spiritual Jurisdiction, its solemn *Censures* and *Excommunications*, are exercised in the Church of *England*, by *unconsecrated* and meer *Laymen*. These *hold the Keys*, open or shut, cast out or admit to it, according to their sole Pleasure. The *Chancellors*, *Officials*, *Surrogates*——who administer the Jurisdiction of spiritual Courts, and determine the most important spiritual Matters, such as *delivering Men to the Devil*, &c. frequently are, and by express Provision of Law, *always* may be *Laymen*. And truly, Sir, I greatly pity you Gentlemen of the *Clergy*, that some of the most tremendous and solemn Parts of your *sacred* Office, such as *Excommunications*, *Absolutions*, &c. you are *forced* to perform, not according to, but sometimes, perhaps, directly against your own Judgments, as you are *authoritatively* directed and commanded by these *Lay-persons*. *Forced*, I say, to do it, notwithstanding what you urge about *your own Concurrence*; for if you refuse *to concur*, you are immediately liable to *Suspension ab officio & beneficio*; and if you continue obstinate, to be *excommunicated* your ownselves †.

The *Church of* Jesus Christ never owed its *Support* (it *scorned* to owe its Propagation and Support) to the *Powers*, *Preferments* and *Riches* of this World

* Acts viii. 20, 21.

† There is one Thing, says Bishop *Burnet*, yet wanting to compleat the Reformation of the Church; which is to restore primitive Discipline against scandalous Persons, the establishing the Government of the Church in *Ecclesiastical Hands*, and taking it out of *Lay-Hands*, which have so long prophaned it; and have exposed the Authority of the Church and the Censures of it, chiefly *Excommunication*, to the Contempt of the Nation; so that the dreadfullest of all Censures, is now become the most scorned and despised.———*Hist. Reform. Abridg. Pag.* 367.

World; 'twas its *Glory*, that it made its Way, and was eſtabliſhed upon Earth, not only *without*, but in *direct Oppoſition* to them: It commands its Miniſters *not to* STRIVE, *but to be gentle to all Men*; *in Meekneſs*, *inſtructing thoſe who gainſay*—(2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) But the *Church of England*, conſcious of its Weakneſs, props itſelf on every Side with *civil* Dignities and Emoluments; calls in the Powers and Riches of *this World* to its Support and Defence; intrenches itſelf deep under Shelter of *penal Laws*, and from thence thunders out its *Excommunications*, and Threats of *Fines* and *Impriſonments*, upon any who ſhall dare to write or ſpeak any thing derogatory to its Ceremonies and Forms of Worſhip, or its Articles of Faith*.

There is one Difficulty more, Sir, which I have often revolved, but could never poſſibly get over; it ſeems to hang as a *dead* and *inſuperable* Weight upon the Frame of your Church; if you can handſomely remove it, you will merit *Lambeth* for a Reward.

The *Church of England* and the *Church of Chriſt* ſeem to be *two* Societies, abſolutely *diſtinct*, and of a quite *different* Conſtitution, as they have *two* different HEADS, or FOUNTAINS *of Power*, whence all Authority, Juriſdiction, and Miniſtrations in the *two* Churches ſeverally ſpring. In the Church of *Jeſus*

* The IV, V, VIth *Canons* ſolemnly denounce—"That whoſoever ſhall affirm that the Form of GOD's Worſhip contained in the *Common-prayer*, hath any Thing in it repugnant to the Word of GOD—or that any of the XXXIX Articles are in any Part erroneous, or ſuch as may not with a good Conſcience be ſubſcribed, let him be EXCOMMUNICATED *ipſo facto*, and not be reſtored until he repent and publickly revoke his wicked Errors."

And by the *Act of Uniformity*, it is enacted—"That if any one ſhall declare, or ſpeak any Thing in the Derogation or depraving of the Book of *Common-prayer*, he ſhall, for the *firſt* Offence, ſuffer Impriſonment one whole Year, without Bail or Mainprize; and for the *ſecond* Offence ſhall be *impriſoned during his Life*."

Jesus Christ, HIMSELF is *supreme Head*, the only Lawgiver and Sovereign: *To us there is but* ONE *Lord**. ONE *is your Master, even* CHRIST †. *Gave him to be* HEAD *over all Things to the Church* ‡. ALL POWER *is given to* ME *in Heaven and in Earth, go ye therefore teach all Nations* §. CHRIST is the ONLY *Fountain* of Influence, Jurisdiction, and Power in *his* Church, by Commission from whom *alone* all its Officers act.

But in the Church of *England*, you well know, Sir, the *King* or *Queen* is SUPREME HEAD, "vested "with *all Power* to exercise all Manner of *Ecclesi-* "*astical* Jurisdiction, and *Archbishops*, *Bishops*, *Arch-* "*deacons*, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, have *no* "*Manner* of Jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by and "under the KING's *Majesty*, who hath full Power "and Authority to hear and determine *all Manner* "of Causes ecclesiastical, and to reform, and cor- "rect *all* Vice, Sin, Errors, Heresies, Enormities, "Abuses whatsoever, which by *any Manner* of spi- "ritual Authority or Jurisdiction ought, or may "be lawfully reformed *."——

At the first Establishment of this Church under *Hen.* VIII. and *Edw.* VI. all the *Bishops* took out Commissions from *the* CROWN, for the exercising of their *spiritual Jurisdiction* in these Kingdoms, during the *King*'s Pleasure only; "and in their Commis- "sions acknowledge all sort of Jurisdiction, as well "ecclesiastical as civil, to have flowed originally "from the REGAL *Power*, as from a *supreme Head*, "and a *Fountain* and *Spring* of all Magistracy with- "in his own Kingdom †."

Yea, even the *Power of Ordination* itself, which is reckoned a *Peculiar* of the episcopal Office, the first Re-

* 1 Cor. viii. 6. † Matt. xxiii. 8. ‡ Ephes. i. 22. § Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

* 26 Hen. VIII. Cap. i. 37 Hen. VIII. Cap. xvii. 1 Eliz. Cap. i. † Burnet's Hist. Reform. Part II. Col. p. 91.

Reformers and Founders of this Church derived from the KING, and exercised only as by Authority from *him*, and during his Pleasure. "Thus *Cranmer* Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, *Bonner* Bishop of *London*, &c. took out Commissions from *the Crown*, importing, that because the Vicegerent (*Cromwel*, a Lay-person) could not personally attend the charge in all Parts of the Kingdom, *the* KING authorises *the Bishop* in his (the *King*'s) Stead, to ordain, within his Diocese, such as he judged worthy of holy Orders; to collate to Benefices; to give Institution; and to execute all other Parts of the Episcopal Authority; and this during the King's Pleasure only *."

In consequence of this SUPREMACY, the KING or QUEEN of *this Church* hath Power to excommunicate from, or to re-admit into it, independent of, yea, in direct Opposition to, all its *Bishops* and *Clergy*. The KING or QUEEN, revoke, if they please, any spiritual Censures of the *Bishops* or *Archbishops*; yet can suspend, deprive, or even excommunicate, themselves or can, by their Proclamation only, without the least Confession, Humiliation, or Satisfaction for their Offence, pardon and restore *excommunicated Persons*, the vilest Offenders, to the Church's Bosom again †.

Yea, further; they have Power to forbid all Preaching for a Time; as did K. *Hen.* VIII. K. *Edw.* VI. Q. *Mary*, Q. *Eliz.*— to limit, instruct, and prescribe to *the Clergy* what they shall, and what they shall not preach; as did Q. *Eliz.* K. *James* I. K. *Charles* I. K. *William*, &c.—Finally, to the *King* or *Queen* ONLY does it pertain to declare *what is* HERESY, and *authoritatively* to pronounce what *Doctrines*

* *Vid.* Examination of the *Codex Juris*, &c. Pag. 32, 33.

† A *Parson* was deprived for Adultery; afterwards a general Pardon came, which pardoned the Adultery. It was adjudged that the *Parson* was *ipso facto*, restored to his Benefice. *Coke* 6 Rep. 13.

trines and *Tenets* are, and what are not, to be cenſured as ſuch: Nor have all the *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, aſſembled in Convocation, the leaſt Authority to cenſure any Tenet as *heretical*, if the PRINCE on the Throne refuſe his Conſent.

Now here, Sir, I am preſſed with an *inſuperable Difficulty* how to reconcile this Conſtitution of the *Church of England* with the Conſtitution of the *Church of Chriſt*. Are they not moſt indiſputably *two different* Societies, ſubject to *two different*, ſometimes *oppoſite*, Authorities, animated and governed by *two different* Heads? In CHRIST's *Church*, HIMSELF is the *only* Sovereign and Head; HE only hath Power to decree Ceremonies and Rites, to fix Terms of Communion and Authority in Points of Faith: Nor hath any *earthly Prince* Power to make Laws in *his* Kingdom, which ſhall bind the Conſciences of *his* Subjects; or ſovereignly to dictate to *his* Servants and Miniſters what they ſhall believe, and what they ſhall preach. Yea, *his Subjects* are expreſly commanded and charged to receive nothing as *Doctrine* or *Parts of Religion*, which are only *Commandments of Men* *. But in the *Church of England* there is ANOTHER *Sovereign*, *Law-giver*, SUPREME HEAD beſides JESUS CHRIST; an *Authority* which commands Things which CHRIST never commanded, which teaches Doctrines HE never taught, which enjoins Terms of Communion, and Rites of religious Worſhip, which CHRIST never enjoined.—What now can I judge, Sir! What do you yourſelf judge! but that the *two Churches* are two diſtinct and *quite different* Societies (for in *one* and *the ſame* Society, ſurely there cannot be TWO *Supreme Heads*) that they are framed after different Models, conſiſt of different Members, are governed by different Officers, Statutes, and Laws.—Conſequently, my SEPARATION or DISSENT from *the one*

* Matt. xv. 9.

one, does, by no Means infer my SEPARATION from *the other*. Yea, what am I to judge but that by the Allegiance I owe to CHRIST my ONLY *ſupreme Head* and *King* in ſpiritual Matters, I am *obliged* to enter my Proteſt againſt the Pretenſions and Claims of any OTHER *ſupreme Head*. For, can a Man *ſerve two Maſters?* Can he be ſubject at the ſame Time to TWO *ſupreme Heads?* Can he be faithful to CHRIST, the *only* KING in the Church, and yet acknowledge ANOTHER *King*, as a Fountain of all Magiſtracy and Power therein? Surely he cannot.

Permit me, good Sir, to exerciſe your Patience a Moment or two more upon this remarkable *Contraſt*, and I will diſmiſs the ungrateful Subject.

By the Conſtitution of the *Church of Chriſt*, 'tis expreſly ordered and declared—That *the* WOMAN *ſhall not be ſuffered publickly to teach, nor to uſurp Authority over the Man**. But by the Conſtitution of the *Church of England*, the WOMAN is permitted *publickly to teach*, yea, to limit and controul in *ſpiritual* and *religious* Matters, and authoritatively to INSTRUCT all the *Biſhops*, and *Clergy*, and *Men* in the Land. Thus did Queen *Elizabeth*, thus did Queen *Anne*, and thus hath *every Queen* Authority to do that ſits upon our Throne; Authority to *preſcribe* and *dictate* to all, both Miniſters and People, what the one are to preach, and the other to receive. And was it not, Sir, a very comely and edifying Sight, to behold the two Houſes of Convocation waiting upon the good Q. (*Anne*†) in the Caſe of *Whiſton*'s Books upon the Trinity, to be *inſtructed* by her Majeſty whether they were to be condemned as *heretical*, or not? that venerable and learned Body had ſolemnly decreed them to be *dangerous* and *heretical*; but this their *Cenſure* was of no Force, till they had laid it before *the Queen*, to have her Judgment upon the Point. Upon her Majeſty's Determination

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* 1 Tim. ii. 12. † Anno 1711.

mination it *entirely* depended, whether *Whiſton*'s Tenets were to be *rejected* by the *Church of England* as erroneous, or not. Her Majeſty, in this Caſe, was of a *different* Opinion from her two Houſes of Convocation; ſhe thought not fit to cenſure the Books: So her *ſingle* Opinion, ſtrange to relate! her *ſingle* Opinion carries it againſt that of *her Biſhops* and *Clergy*. She over-rules and ſets aſide all their Proceedings, *reſtrains* and *counteracts* them in one of the very chief of their *paſtoral* Functions, the guarding againſt Errors and Hereſies in the Church.

Behold here, Sir, A WOMAN exerciſing ſpiritual eccleſiaſtical Authority over *the Man!* Yea, behold *the Repreſentative* of the Clergy of the whole Land, a moſt learned, grave and venerable Body, waiting upon A WOMAN to learn from her Mouth, what *the Church* is to believe, and what to reject, as to this great *Myſtery of Faith:* Upon A WOMAN, who could be ſuppoſed to know as little of this Matter as of the Motion of the Stars; yet, by her *ſole* Determination, (I repeat it with Aſtoniſhment, and you hear it, no doubt, with Perplexity and Grief) *your Church* was uncontroulably and authoritatively directed in this deep and myſterious Point.

I aſk you, Sir, in the *Name of* GOD, is *this* the Conſtitution and Frame of the *Church of* CHRIST? Is it not *a Conſtitution* of a quite different Nature; a Society not DIVINELY, but *humanly* inſtituted; and therefore, by your own Definition, NOT the *Church of Chriſt?* And may not, think you, a Perſon ſeparate peaceably from it, without any the leaſt Danger of thereby ſeparating himſelf from the one ſcriptural, apoſtolic, and catholic Church?

When you ſtrip the *Pope* of his SUPREMACY, and gave it to our *Princes*, you ſhould have taken Care not to have left his INFALLIBILITY behind. An *infallible Head* and Director of *the Church*, be it *Woman* or *Man*, be it an *He* or a *She-biſhop*, is a Thing plauſible enough, and carries a good Face:

But

But to lodge the abſolute Direction of the *Conſcience*, the *Faith* and the *Diſcipline* of the Church with a *fallible Head!* to give *a Prince*, yea a LADY bred up in all the Softneſſes and Diverſions of a Court, an uncontroulable Dominion over the religious Conduct both of Clergy and Laity, authoritatively to direct what *thoſe* are to preach, and what *theſe* to believe as the *Doctrine of* CHRIST! to make HER the *ſole Judge* in all Controverſies which ſhall ariſe upon any the moſt myſterious and inexplicable Points; ſo that *all the Prieſts* are to *aſk knowledge* at HER *Lips*; and whatever SHE determines is to be received by the Church as *Chriſtian Verity* and *Truth!* This is ſuch *a Conſtitution* as quite ſhocks the Underſtanding, and comes not a whit behind *Tranſubſtantiation* itſelf. Hence, doubtleſs, Sir, the Triumphs of *Popiſh Prieſts* over you! Hence their Inroads upon you, and the thouſands they are continually carrying captive from your Tents! And hence the ſad Increaſe, and the Inſults of *Deiſts*, who taking the Scheme of the *Church of England* to be that of the *Chriſtian Church*, are authoriſed by common Senſe, they think, not only to reject, but to treat it with Contempt!

And now, Sir, having ſo largely diſcuſſed this Point, I preſume you are convinced, "*That this* "*ſame peaceable Separation of ours is not*, what you "call it, *a Piece of arrant Nonſenſe and Contradic-* "*tion*;" and that you will ceaſe to be ſo diſpleaſed at our treating your grave Lectures upon the heinous Sin of SCHISM, as *ſolemn Cant* and *Eccleſiaſtical Scare-crows*. You ſee, likewiſe, how extremely unapt, and quite wide of the Point, are the *two Inſtances* you bring to illuſtrate our Caſe, *viz* "of a Wife "ſeparating from the Bed and Board of her Huſ- "band—Or of two or three Counties diſliking a "monarchial Government, and throwing off their "Allegiance to the King*". Has the *Church of*

* Let. I. Page 72.

England, Sir, any ſuch Power or Authority over *us Diſſenters*, as the Huſband has over the Wife? Pray who gave it that Authority? Have we ever plighted it our Troth? or bound ourſelves by a ſolemn Vow to honour and obey it to the End of our Life?—Or have we ever ſworn Allegiance to it; or do we owe it any Homage; as *the Counties* have ſworn and do owe to *the King?*

Amongſt the *peculiar* Excellencies of *your Church* you reckon "The Uſe of the *three Creeds* in publick "Worſhip; as one of the moſt effectual and pow- "erful Means both for teaching and preſerving the "Chriſtian Faith entire and uncorrupt, which we "have not in our Churches*." The *Creed* called *the Apoſtles*, we have in conſtant uſe among us: And as for the *two other*, eſpecially the *Athanaſian*, we are content you ſhould have the Honour of its being *peculiar* to yourſelves. But methinks, Sir, it ſhould a little check your Triumph over us here, to remember, that ſome of the wiſeſt and moſt illuſtrious Members of your Church, both Clergy and Laity, account the uſe of *this Creed* your great Sin and Reproach, and with A. B. *Tillotſon*, *wiſh you were well rid of it.*

What are *you*, Sir, amongſt the *weak* and *uncharitable* Minds who *damn to the Pit of Hell* all who cannot receive all the dark and *myſterious Points* ſet forth in that Creed! Do you in your Conſcience think that there is NO SALVATION *for thoſe who do not faithfully believe* the ſeveral Articles it contains; and that *whoſoever doth not keep whole and undefiled the Faith therein deliver'd, he ſhall* WITHOUT DOUBT *periſh everlaſtingly?* What! the many great and worthy Perſons, bright Ornaments of your own Church, who inſtead of *keeping it whole and undefiled*, have openly diſavow'd, preach'd and wrote againſt it, dying in this Diſbelief, have they *without*

* Let. I. Page. 15.

out peradventure everlaſtingly periſh'd? Alas! for the good Doctors *Clarke*, *Whitby*, *Burnet*, &c.——For the illuſtrious Sir *Iſaac*, *&c. &c.* Yea, alas! for the whole *Greek Church* who have ſtrenuouſly rejected the Article of the *Filioq*; —They are gone down, it ſeems, to the *infernal Pit!* And notwithſtanding their great Knowledge and Piety in this World, are, for not believing the *Athanaſian Creed*, ſunk into EVERLASTING DARKNESS and DAMNATION in the other! Do you wonder *Deiſm* prevails, if this be genuine *Chriſtianity?*

'Tis a Fact, I preſume, indiſputable, that a great Part of the moſt learned and virtuous of your Clergy are departed from the *Athanaſian* Doctrine; and that thoſe of them who are not, do by no means think its Belief *abſolutely* and *indiſpenſably* neceſſary to Salvation. What now muſt *a Deiſt* think, when he hears both the one and the other *thirteen* Times a Year, moſt ſolemnly declaring in the Preſence of *Almighty* GOD, and as Inſtructors of his People, *that whoever will be ſaved, it is before all Things neceſſary that he hold the* ATHANASIAN *Faith*; and moſt *peremptorily denouncing* EVERLASTING DAMNATION upon thoſe who *do not believe it*; that is, many of them denouncing DAMNATION upon *themſelves!*——Is this your "*powerful and effectual* "*Means of preſerving the Chriſtian Faith?*"——I ſhould think it one of the *moſt effectual* to ſubvert and deſtroy it. It has no doubt, been in fact a great ſtumbling-block in the Way of *Infidels and Jews*, and harden'd them in their Oppoſition to the *Religion of* CHRIST, when they ſee it dooming to *undoubted* and *everlaſting* Perdition all who do not heartily and ſincerely believe (for that muſt be meant by *faithfully)* theſe deep and myſterious Points, which we acknowledge to be inexplicable, and far above the powers of Reaſon to comprehend.

" But the Diſſenting Miniſters, you tell me, who " have complied with the Terms of the Toleration,

" have

" have solemnly subscribed *the* VIIIth *Article* which " approves the *Athanasian* Creed *." Let Dr. *Calamy* answer †. " The dissenting Ministers about the " City, in a Body, gave in their Sense of the Ar- " ticles when they subscribed them, and among the " rest of this VIIIth Article, in the Gloss upon " which, the *damnatory Clauses* of this Creed are " expressly *excluded* the Subscription.—And there " was something of the same Nature done in seve- " ral Parts of the Country." Now the Fathers and Predecessors of the present dissenting Ministers having made this *public* Protest and Declaration at their Subscription, and the *Legislature* having accepted, or at least not rejected it; under the Favour of *this Protest* their Successors may be supposed now to subscribe with the *same Disapprobation* of the damnatory Clause. If it were not to be thus taken, there is, I hope, not a Minister among us but would publickly disown and renounce his Subscription.

I should now proceed, Sir, to the Examination of other Parts of your Letters, to shew the great *Insufficiency* of your Arguments and Objections; and to observe that, in many Instances, you have extremely mistaken and given quite wrong Representations of our religious Principles and Practice. —But I relieve your patience at present.—If this Province be undertaken by no other Hand, you may in some Time, by divine Permission, expect to hear farther from,

Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

A DISSENTER.

* Appendix, Page 78. † Life of Mr. *Baxter*, Page 236.

THE

Micaiah Towgood.

THE

Diſſenting Gentleman's SECOND LETTER

To the REVEREND

Mr. *WHITE*,

In ANSWER to his

THREE LETTERS.

IN WHICH

His VARIOUS MISREPRESENTATIONS of the DISSENTERS are corrected,

His OBJECTIONS againſt them anſwer'd,

And the GROUNDS of their DISSENT are further repreſented, and proved ſolid and juſt.

To which is added a

POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING

REMARKS on Mr. *WHITE*'s Defence of his Three Letters, &c.

In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, Mark vii. 7.

DUBLIN:

Printed by S. POWELL and SON, in *Dame-ſtreet*.

MDCCLXV.

THE

DISSENTING GENTLEMAN's

SECOND LETTER, &c.

SIR,

THIS with ſome Regret I proceed in Vindication of my Diſſent, as it will conſtrain me to ſay ſome things, which may ſeem to be diſreſpectful to *eſtabliſhed Forms* of Worſhip. But *Self-Defence* is a Principle which generous Minds allow ſtrongly to operate. I highly reverence and eſteem, and moſt heartily rejoice in the great Number of illuſtrious and excellent Perſons, both *Clergy* and *Laity*, which the Church of *England* can boaſt. But yet, as the preſent *eſtabliſh'd Forms* were drawn up when this Kingdom juſt emerg'd out of *Popiſh* Darkneſs; and as in Drawing them up, *eſpecial Regard* was had to the *then* Weakneſs of the People, who could not be all at once entirely brought off from the old Ceremonies and Forms: As there are ſeveral Parts of our Liturgy, and eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution, which a great Number, I apprehend, if not all our *Biſhops* and *Clergy*, wiſh to ſee alter'd: And finally, as the Alteration of thoſe, and the Removing a few Things, acknowledg'd in themſelves to be *mutable* and *indifferent*, would heal the *unhappy Breach*, and reſtore the chief Part of the Diſſenters to the Church——

Upon all these Accounts, I may be allow'd I hope, with Freedom to make *my Defence* against your vigorous Attacks; and to represent my Objections, and the Grounds of my *Dissent*, in as strong a Light as I am able.

The Part of a public *Monitor*, and of my *Instructor* in this Affair, which you have *voluntarily* taken on you, will allow me, as I go along, to put you in mind of a great Objection or two which Dissenters are wont to urge, but which you have quite overlook'd, and to intreat you will direct me How to get over them.

"We Letter-Writers, say you, have a Privi-"lege of setting down our Thoughts as they offer "themselves, without scrupulously adhering to strict "and close Method *." This Privilege you have indeed with great Freedom taken: I shall therefore be indulg'd the same.

To begin then with your Defence of SPONSORS *in Baptism*. It is the Opinion of the *Dissenters*, that when an *Infant* is brought to be enter'd by Baptism into the Family or Church of GOD, and a solemn *Vow* and *Engagement* is to be made before the Church for its *religious Education*; that *the* PARENTS, whose Child it is, and to whom both GOD and *Nature* have committed its Education; that *those*, I say, are the *proper Persons* to stand forth, and take upon them this great and important Trust; and to bind themselves by a *solemn Vow* faithfully to discharge it. Now our Objections to the Order and Practice of *your Church* are,

1. That in a very arbitrary and strange Manner, without the least Shadow of Authority from *Reason* or *Scripture*, or the *ancient Practice* of the Church, you actually SET ASIDE the Parents in this Solemnity; and FORBID them to stand forth, and take upon them this great Charge to which GOD hath called them.

* Let. III. p. 60.

them. For your XXIXth *Canon* expreſly commands, *That no Parent ſhall be urged to be preſent at his Child's Baptiſm, nor* BE ADMITTED *to anſwer as Godfather for* HIS OWN *Child.* And,

2. That you require *other Perſons* to appear in the *Parents* Stead, and to take upon them this *important Truſt*, and moſt ſolemnly to promiſe before GOD, and *the Church*, the Performance of that, which few of them ever do, or ever intended to perform; or, perhaps, are ever capable of performing. What now, Sir, is *your Anſwer* to theſe *Objections* of the Diſſenters? Why, truly, the *firſt*, which is indeed the *chief*, you very prudently *ſlip over*; and attempt not the leaſt Apology for *ſetting aſide* the Parents; ſo that you leave us ſtill to conſider *this*, as a Thing utterly indefenſible, unlawful, abſurd, and which will admit of no Excuſe.

But as to the *ſecond*, *viz.* the *ſolemn Vow and Obligation* under which the *Sureties* lay themſelves, to this you largely ſpeak; and tell me—"It is a "groſs Miſtake to imagine, that the Promiſes "there made by the *Sureties* concerning the future "Faith and Practice of the Child, are made in "their *own Name:* As if *they engaged* thereby, "that, when it is grown up, it ſhall actually be-"lieve all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, ſhall "renounce the Devil and all his Works, *&c.* "Whereas the Church conſiders *theſe Anſwers*, as "the CHILD's *Anſwers*, only made by its *Repre-"ſentatives:* they contain ITS *Part* of the baptiſ-"mal Covenant or Contract; which, becauſe, by "Reaſon of its tender Age, it cannot *itſelf* utter, "is utter'd by *its Sureties*—*." But if this be, Sir, a *groſs Miſtake*, the moſt celebrated of *your own Writers* have led us into it. "*The Sureties in Bap-"tiſm*, ſays your learned Dr. *Nichols* †, *religiouſly*

 "ENGAGE

* Lett. I. p. 31. Part II. p. 273.

† Nichols's Defence, &c.

" ENGAGE *for the Faith of the baptiſed*; *that they* " SHALL *ſincerely believe all that is revealed in the* " *Goſpel, and* SHALL *direct the ſubſequent Actions* " *of their Lives by the Laws of Chriſt.*" A Cloud of Witneſſes, I believe, can be brought from the *Doctors* of your Church, whoſe Judgment is the ſame. But no wonder the Learned differ in ſo myſterious a Point.—You go on and affirm—" That " the *Sureties* are, by the Church, conſidered in " this affair, *no otherwiſe* than as *the Mouth* of the " Child.—You ſee, Sir, here are NO *Promiſes* NOR " *Engagements* which ANY beſides *the* CHILD are " ſuppoſed to enter into, and to be bound by. " Read over the Office of public Baptiſm, you " will not find, I aſſure you ANY *Promiſes or Sti-* " *pulations* at all made by *the Sureties* in their own " Name: I mean any that are explicit *." But this Account of the Matter appears to me extremely dark; and rather greatly to ſtrengthen than remove our Objections. For,

FIRST, It repreſents *the Church* as acting a very extraordinary and unaccountable Part; *viz.* as receiving *a Child* to Baptiſm, on Account of ITS OWN *Faith*, and ITS OWN *Promiſe*, utter'd by its *Sureties*; when at the ſame time, it knows, *the Child* neither does nor can, either *promiſe* or *believe* any more than the Font at which 'tis baptized. It conſiders the Child as ACTUALLY *covenanting* and *contracting*, yea, as the ONLY covenanting and contracting *Party* in this Solemnity, when it knows it to be abſolutely *incapable* of either. It repreſents *the Church* as very ſolemnly aſking THE CHILD—*Doſt thou believe? Wilt thou be baptized? Doſt thou forſake the Devil?* &c. When it is fully perſuaded of its *utter Inability* to believe, or reſolve, or will any Thing about it. Now when *a Deiſt* ſtands by, and ſees a learned and grave Divine thus aſking, and

* Nichols's Defence, &c. Part II. p. 31, 32.

and talking, and covenanting with *a Child*, can you wonder, Sir, if he ſmiles, and merrily treats the whole Tranſaction as a Jeſt?

"*The Anſwers*, you ſay, *are conſidered by the* "*Church as* ONLY *the Anſwers of* THE CHILD, *and* "*contain* ITS *Part of the baptiſmal Covenant*; "*which becauſe, by Reaſon of its tender Age, it can-* "*not itſelf utter, is to be uttered by its Sureties:*" That is to ſay, the Child *thinks*, but cannot *ſpeak:* It really *covenants*, *contracts*, *promiſes*, but not being able by Reaſon of its tender Age to *utter* its good intentions, theſe *Sureties* are *its Mouth* to utter them for it. But why, good Sir, its *Mouth* to ſpeak for it; and not its *Underſtanding* alſo to think for it; its *Will* to promiſe for it; and indeed its *Soul*, and its *very ſelf*, to covenant and contract for it? Is not *the Child*, by Reaſon of its tender Age, as abſolutely incapable of *Covenanting*, as 'tis of *Uttering*; of *Contracting*, as 'tis of *Speaking?* If the *Surety* therefore does *one* of theſe good Offices for it, he undoubtedly does *the other* alſo. But,

SECONDLY, If there be, as you ſay, NO *Promiſes* NOR *Engagements which* ANY *beſides* THE CHILD *are ſuppoſed to enter into, or to be bound by*, the Conſequence is extremely plain, that then there are no Promiſes nor Engagements entered into *at all*, for its *religious Education*. For *the Child* ſurely, does not *engage* for *its own* religious Education. If the *Sureties* therefore do not enter into any Promiſe of this Kind, it evidently follows, that there are no expreſs Engagements entered into *by any* for the Child's Education. And thus, behold, your boaſted *double Security*, turns out at laſt *no Security* at all! But, a *Surety* not *bound!* a *Sponſor* promiſing *nothing!* a *Security unengaged!* This is Language, Sir, in the *mercantile*, whatever it may be in the *ſcholaſtic* Way of Life, abſolutely unintelligible. And to retort your own Inſtance; my Lawyer I ſhould

ſhould think a very wrong-headed Man, who ſhould pretend to lend my Money upon a *double Security*, and make a Merit of ſo doing, when at the ſame Time he confeſſed, there were NO *Promiſes*, NOR *Engagements*, *by* which *either* of the Securities were *explicitly bound*.

To be plain, Sir; as for this Buſineſs of *a Child's* believing, promiſing, covenanting by *Repreſentative* or *Proxy*, I cannot but think a Gentleman of your Penetration, will eaſily perceive it to be a Thing abſolutely inexplicable, impoſſible, and abſurd; a Thing utterly repugnant to Reaſon and common Senſe, and without the leaſt Shadow of Foundation in the *Chriſtian* Religion. For if by the Conſtitution of the Goſpel Covenant, a Child may *believe* by Proxy, *repent* by Proxy, *vow*, *promiſe*, and *contract* by Proxy. he may alſo, no doubt, *be ſaved* by Proxy, or *be damned* by Proxy. But, into what a Jeſt will this turn the Religion of *Chriſt?*

As for the *Antiquity* of this Practice, *Sponſors in Baptiſm*, you have the good Senſe and Ingenuity not to pretend it was ever known, or ſo much as thought of, in the primitive *apoſtolic* Church. *Tertullian*, who lived about *Anno Dom.* 200, is the *firſt*, I apprehend, of all Chriſtian Writers, that makes any mention of them. Nor does it at all follow from what *he* ſays, that theſe *Sponſors* were any other than *the Parents* of the Child. *Juſtin Martyr* who wrote fifty Years before him, when he particularly deſcribes the Method and Form of *Chriſtian Baptiſm* in his Days, ſays not a *ſingle Word* of any ſuch Perſons *.

But we learn from *St. Auſtin*, about the Year 390 (one of the earlieſt of Chriſtian Writers, in which any mention of them is found) *when*, and upon *what* Occaſion, theſe *Sponſors* were admitted.

" A

* Vid. Lord King's Enquiry, Part II. p. 67, 68.

" A great many, says he, are offered to Baptism, " not by their Parents, but by others; as *Infant-* " *Slaves* are sometimes offered by their Masters. " And sometimes when the Parents are dead, the " Infants are baptized, being offered by any, who " can afford to shew this Compassion to them. " And sometimes Infants whom their Parents have " cruelly exposed, to be brought up by those who " light on them, are now and then taken up by " the holy Virgins, and offered to Baptism by " them who have no children of their own, nor " design to have any."——These are * *Austin's* words. Observe now Dr. *Wall's* † ingenuous Confession on them (and the good Doctor you know, Sir, was never partial in Favour of Dissenters, but a severe Remarker on them:) " *Here we see the* ORDINARY *Use then was for* PARENTS *to answer* " *for the Children: But yet that this was not counted* " SO NECESSARY, *as that a Child could not be bap-* " *tized without it.*"

Hence then it is plain, that *Parents* never were *set aside*, when they were *capable* and *willing* to offer their children; and that only in Cases of *Parents* Incapacity, were *Sponsors* admitted: And in all *such Cases*, Dissenters also use them. Why now, I beseech you Sir, in Defiance of this acknowledged Usage and Practice of the *ancient Church*, as well as of *common Sense*, does *your Church* severely decree, " *That* NO PARENT *shall be urged to be* PRE- " SENT *at his Child's Baptism, nor be* ADMITTED " *to answer as Godfather for it?*" What! would the Parents standing forth *together with* the Sponsors, and promising *jointly* with them, at all *detract* from this Solemnity, or render it *less effectual*, to secure the Child's religious Education? It is most evident it would not, and that your Practice in this Point is undoubtedly an *Innovation*; an unreasonable,

* Epist. ad Bonifac. † Hist. Inf. Bap. Vol. I. p. 196.

reaſonable, abſurd, and arbitrary *Deviation* from the Uſage and Inſtitution of the primitive *apoſtolic* Church; an *Abſurdity* very generally acknowledged, and complained of, by the Members of *your Church*, though not attempted to be *reformed.*

" But by *this Inſtitution* of Godfathers and God-" mothers, you ſay, your Church affords its Mem-" bers ſome *great* and *ſpecial Advantages* towards " growing in Grace and Goodneſs, *above* what are " found amongſt us:" and you tell me, " you " lay a great ſtreſs upon it, as a *wiſe*, an *uſeful*, " and *neceſſary* Inſtitution *." — But did you not conſider, Sir, that you were here *highly reflecting* upon the Wiſdom and Goodneſs, not of the *holy Apoſtles* only, but of your *great Law giver* JESUS CHRIST? Theſe SPECIAL ADVANTAGES *for Growth in Goodneſs and Holineſs*, how came it to paſs that the great *Founders* of the *Chriſtian Church* never happened to think of them? You do not pretend *it* to be *an Inſtitution* of JESUS CHRIST's, and yet are not *afraid* to call it a *wiſe*, and *uſeful*, and even a NECESSARY *Inſtitution.* Strange! that CHRIST, in whom were *hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom*, and who loved the Church ſo as to *lay down his Life for it*, ſhould not *know* this Inſtitution to be ſo *eſpecially advantageous* to the growing Goodneſs of his Church; or that knowing it to be ſo, he ſhould *unkindly* omit it; and that we are obliged to the *ſuperior* Wiſdom and Goodneſs of *after Ages* for ſupplying this Defect. It has uſually been thought, that *the Apoſtles* declared the WHOLE *Counſel of* GOD; and *kept back* NOTHING *from the Church which was profitable* to it; and that *the Scriptures* are a *perfect Rule*; but this, it ſeems, is not true; you have diſcover'd it, Sir, to be *not true:* For here you ſhew us a *wiſe*, an *uſeful*, and a NECESSARY *Inſtitution*, which they really *kept back:* and which

* Let. I. p. 58, 59.

which had it not been for the *Sagacity* of their Succeſſors, *the Church* had been ſo unhappy as never to have known. Into what Mazes Men plunge themſelves, when they deviate from the Truth!

Of the ſame *Temerity* you are guilty, Sir, when treating of *another Inſtitution* of your Church, CONFIRMATION, and glorying over us in its Want. "Another Adminiſtration of our Church is *Confir-* "*mation*; this you know you have already diſcard- "ed, and ſurely you will be obliged to acknowlege "you have loſt thereby a *very great Advantage*—— "greatly *conducive* to future Holineſs of Life*." Yes, Sir, this we will freely own, when you alſo will acknowlege, that you are *wiſer* than *the Apoſtles*; and can better judge what is *conducive to Holineſs*, and for the *Advantage of the Church*, than its great Lawgiver JESUS CHRIST. Had this Ceremony of *Confirmation* been really of *great Advantage*, and *conducive to Holineſs*, it is very ſtrange that neither CHRIST, nor his *Apoſtles*, ſhould have *ordained* it. That it is an *apoſtolic* Inſtitution, you have not ſo much as attempted to prove: unleſs *Calvin*'s Conjecture muſt be admitted as Proof.

The Text uſually urg'd for it, (*Acts* viii. 14.) I preſume you are fully ſenſible has *no Weight*. *Peter*'s and *John*'s going down to *Samaria* to *pray*, and *lay their Hands* on thoſe whom *Philip* had baptiſed, is, ſurely, no Precedent, no Direction, no Inſtitution nor Command for *our Biſhops* to do likewiſe. For *the End* for which *the Apoſtles* did it, 'tis expreſly ſaid (ver. 15, 17.) was, *that they might receive the* HOLY GHOST, *i. e.* its miraculous Gifts; *and they pray'd for them and laid their Hands on them, and they received the* HOLY GHOST. That it was his *miraculous Gifts* (ſuch as propheſying, ſpeaking with Tongues, *&c.*) to form them into a Church, cannot be diſputed; becauſe, they were ſomething *viſible*,

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* Let. I. p. 61.

and obvious to *Senſe*, ſomething which ſtruck the Wonder and Ambition of the wicked *Sorcerer*; for 'tis ſaid, *when* SIMON SAW *that thro' laying on of the Apoſtles Hands the* HOLY GHOST *was given, he offered them Money.*—Beſides, as Dr. *Whitby* juſtly obſerves, if they laid not their Hands on *all* who were baptiſed, it makes nothing for *Confirmation*; if they did, then *Simon Magus* alſo was *confirmed*, and received the *Holy Ghoſt:* which you will by no means admit.

It was to give them to the newly baptiſed Converts at *Samaria* the miraculous Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, that *Peter* and *John* went and laid their Hands on them. But do *our Biſhops*, Sir, pretend that, by *their* Praying and Laying on of Hands, the HOLY GHOST *is given?* Do they not *diſclaim* any Powers of this kind? Seeing then they make no Pretenſions to *the End*, why with ſuch Solemnity do we ſee them practiſing *the Means?* Might they not as well ſtretch themſelves upon the dead Body of a Child, in Imitation of *Eliſha*; or, make Ointment with Spittle for the Cure of the Blind, in Imitation of *our Saviour*; or, anoint the Sick with Oil, in Imitation of the *apoſtolic Elders*; as pray and lay their Hands on thoſe who were baptiſed, in Imitation of *Peter* and *John*, who did this to the *Samaritan* Converts ONLY, that they might *receive* the miraculous Gifts and Powers of the *Holy Ghoſt?*

" As for the open and ſolemn Renewal of the " baptiſmal Covenant before GOD and many Wit- " neſſes, which, you ſay, baptiſed Perſons ought to " make, when they come to Years of Diſcretion :" this they make with us, in the *other Sacrament* of the Supper; which *Chriſt* himſelf has appointed, and which is the *only* Inſtitution his Wiſdom has thought fit to appoint, for this Purpoſe.

But if you will ſuffer me to *ſpeak freely*, Sir, this Ceremony of *Confirmation*, as 'tis at preſent appointed and

and practiſed in your Church, to me appears ſo far from being *greatly conducive* to *Holineſs of Life*, as that I wiſh it may not be conducive to a quite different, and a very noxious Effect: even to *cheriſh* in Mens Minds a *preſumptuous* and *falſe Hope*; and to *delude* them into *wrong Notions* as to the Safety of their State, and as to the *Terms* of Acceptance and Favour with GOD.

By the Order of your *Common Prayer*, "ALL "*Perſons baptiſed, when they come to competent Years,* "*and are able to ſay the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and* "*Ten Commandments, and the Anſwers of the ſhort* "*Catechiſm, are to be brought to* CONFIRMATION." The Biſhop having aſked, "*Whether they renew the* "*ſolemn Promiſe and Vow which was made in their* "*Names in Baptiſm.*" *&c.* Upon their Anſwer *we do*, proceeds hereupon to declare in the moſt ſolemn manner, even in an *Addreſs to* GOD himſelf, *that He has vouchſafed to regenerate theſe his Servants by Water and the* HOLY GHOST (note: not by *Water* only, but alſo by the HOLY GHOST) *and to give them the Forgiveneſs of* ALL THEIR SINS: and laying his Hand upon the Head of each particular Perſon, he CERTIFIES *him by that Sign of* GOD's *Favour and gracious Goodneſs towards him.*

I pray you, Sir, in the *Name of* GOD, inform me, what Warrant has *the Biſhop* to pronounce a Man's *Sins* ALL *forgiven*, and himſelf *regenerated* by the HOLY GHOST, upon no other Grounds than his being able to ſay the ſhort Catechiſm, and declaring that he ſtands by his baptiſmal Engagements? Will you ſay that this is the *Chriſtian Doctrine* concerning the Terms of Acceptance and Forgiveneſs with GOD? Are good Vows and Reſolutions, declared in the Church, infallible or proper Proofs of a Regeneration by the *Holy Ghoſt?* Is a Man's *Profeſſing* that he repents, and *Promiſing* that he will live godly, that *actual Repentance* and *Amendment* of Life which

alone can enſure the divine Pardon and Favour? Are there not Multitudes who *call* CHRIST *their* LORD, and publickly profeſs to ſtand by their baptiſmal Covenant, whom yet he will reject with Abhorrence at laſt? You will inform me then, Sir, how his *Lordſhip*, upon his meer Profeſſion and Promiſe, *preſumes* to declare to *Almighty* GOD, and to ASSURE the Perſon, that he is regenerated, forgiven, and without all Peradventure in a State of Favour with Heaven!

The Expreſſions, you muſt acknowledge, are couch'd in abſolute and ſtrong Terms: nor do I find that there is any Intimation, that their Forgiveneſs depends upon their Care to *keep*, and to *live up to*, their baptiſmal Engagements. No: but though their *whole Life* hath hitherto been ſcandalouſly corrupt, yet upon their being able to *ſay the Lord's Prayer*, &c. the Biſhop ſolemnly pronounces a moſt *abſolute Pardon* over them; appeals to *Almighty* GOD that he hath forgiven them *all* their Sins; and leſt this ſhould be too little to ſatisfy the *doubting* Sinner, and quaſh his upbraiding Conſcience, he lays his Hand upon his Head, and CERTIFIES *him by* THAT SIGN *of God's Favour and Goodneſs to him.*

This *Biſhop*, Sir, the Multitudes, who come to be confirm'd, are taught to conſider as an *Ambaſſador* of CHRIST, a *Succeſſor* of the Apoſtles, and a *ſpecial Miniſter* of GOD: when they hear then, this *ſacred Perſon*, ſo ſolemnly declaring that they are fully juſtified, pardoned, and regenerated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, can you blame them if they *believe it*; and reſt ſatisfied that their Souls are in a *ſafe and happy State?* And as full Remiſſion of Sins, and the Favour of GOD, are to be had on ſuch *eaſy Terms*; can you wonder, ſhould you ſee thouſands eagerly flocking from all Quarters to accept it? Or that Perſons of very vile and profligate Characters ſhould often thruſt themſelves in to partake of this Benefit;

Benefit; and be ſeen receiving upon their Knees *epiſcopal* Abſolution, and *ſolemn Aſſurances* of GOD's Favour and Grace?

You know the Aptneſs of Mankind, Sir, to deceive themſelves with *falſe Hopes*; and to ſubſtitute good Purpoſes, Profeſſions, and Vows in the Place of real Repentance and Amendment of Life: and you know this, Sir, (and have no doubt often declared it from your Pulpit) to be one of the *chief Hindrances* of Mens becoming truly good. Now ſhould your Office for *Confirmation* be found thus powerfully and directly tending to *cheriſh* theſe falſe Hopes; you muſt excuſe me if I then ſhould think *it* ſo far from CONDUCING *to Holineſs of Life*, as that in my Conſcience I ſhould believe it to be rather *greatly* OBSTRUCTIVE *to it*; and extremely *deluſive* and *injurious* to the Souls of Men.

Let me further aſk you, Sir, on this Head—Is it any Breach of Charity, to ſuppoſe that amongſt the *vaſt Crowds* which preſent themſelves on ſuch Occaſions, there are often *many*, whom GOD, who knows their Hearts, knows to be Perſons of a corrupt and wicked Mind, and to be ſtill under the Power and Tyranny of Sin? Can the *good Biſhop* himſelf, in any Judgment of Charity ſuppoſe there are not *ſome* ſuch amongſt the *thouſands* he confirms? Candidly tell me then, Sir, upon what grounds he *abſolutely*, and *without Reſerve*, declares to the ETERNAL GOD concerning them ALL, that he hath *fully forgiven theſe his Servants*, when GOD at that Time knows many of them *not* to be his Servants, and that he hath not at all forgiven them? Or, lays his Hand on *each individual* Perſon to aſſure him of GOD's *Favour*, and of his *Regeneration by the* HOLY GHOST; when, in Truth, ſome of thoſe he thus aſſures are abſolute and entire *Strangers* to the renewing Influences of GOD's *Spirit*, and faſt bound in their Sins; To me, Sir, I aſſure you, this appears, I do

not

not ſay a very ſhocking, but I muſt ſay a very unaccountable Solemnity; and ſhould be glad to know how to reconcile it to the *Reverence* you owe to GOD; or to the Faithfulneſs and Charity due to the *Souls* of Men.

Near akin to *this*, but of a yet more obnoxious Nature, is another Office of your *Common Prayer*. The ABSOLUTION *of the Sick*. To *this* you know, Sir, *Diſſenters* have always ſtrongly objected, as too much reſembling the *ſolemn Tricks* of the Church of *Rome*; by which they pretend to ſend Men to Heaven, without real Amendment and Holineſs of Life. But *this* you very prudently paſs over in *perfect Silence:* for what indeed could ſo ingenious an Advocate offer, on ſo extremely abſurd and indefenſible a Point?

Being come to the *ſick Perſon*, (no Matter *what* or *how wicked* his former Life hath been) the *Prieſt* is directed, after ſome pious Exhortations, to examine, "*Whether he believes the Articles of the Apoſ-*" *tles Creed; and truly repent him of his Sins; and* " *be in Charity with all the World: And to move* " *him to make a ſpecial Confeſſion of his Sins, if he* " *feels his Conſcience troubled with any weighty Mat-*" *ter.*" After which Confeſſion, the Prieſt is order'd to ABSOLVE *him* (if he humbly and heartily deſire it) *after this ſort.*

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, *who hath left Power to his Church to* ABSOLVE *all Sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great Mercy forgive thee thine Offences: And by the* AUTHORITY *committed to* ME, *I* ABSOLVE *thee from* ALL THY SINS, *in the Name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST. *Amen.*

The Form is extreamly ſolemn, Sir, and the Matter of the laſt Importance. You had need therefore be ſure you go upon good Grounds, leſt you be found to trifle with the *Name of* GOD, and

in

in Things of *everlasting* Moment, and to acquit those whom he abhors. Permit me, Sir, in this *great Name*, and before the World, to demand of you,

1. *What* Church is it, and *where* is the Church found, to whom CHRIST has left this high Authority and Power? Is it the Church of *England*, the Church of *Scotland*, the Church of *France*, or the Church of *Rome?* Do you here mean by *the Church*, what your XIXth Article hath defined it, *viz. The Congregation of the Faithful?*—Or, do you understand *it* as in your XXth Article, where *it* is said to have *Power to decree Rites, and Authority in Matters of Faith?* If so, I have shewn in my former Letter, that *the Church* is no other than the *King* and *Parliament* of these Realms. The *King*, indeed, has Power to absolve all manner of Sinners, penitent or not penitent; and by a single *Act of Grace*, to vacate and set aside the Censures and Excommunications of all the *Bishops*, *Archbishops*, and *Clergy* of the Land, and to restore the Offender to the Church's Bosom again. To *absolve*, not in *Foro Civili* only, but in *Foro Ecclesiæ*; not in the *State* only, but also in the *Church*. But whether the *Kings* or *Queens* of *England* do this by Authority derived to them from CHRIST? Whether *that Church* of which THEY are declared the supreme Heads, be *the Church* to whom this high Power is given? And whether THEY, as *Heads* of it, have not *this Power* dwelling capitally, supremely, and principally in them; so as that, what THEY *loose on Earth*, is as certainly *loosed in Heaven*, as any Thing that is *loosed* by any inferior Members who officiate in the Church under them——These, Sir, are high Points, which without your Assistance, I shall not presume to settle. Be so good, Sir, as to let us know, WHAT CHURCH *upon Earth* it is, to whom CHRIST hath delegated this *important* AUTHORITY;

THORITY; and WHERE the *Charter* or *Grant* is found, by which he gave it the Commiſſion? But

2. That CHRIST hath given, can give, no ſuch AUTHORITY to *fallible uninſpired* Men, I ſhould think abſolutely out of doubt. Becauſe if he hath given *Power* to any AUTHORITATIVELY *to abſolve thoſe who are truly penitent*, he muſt alſo have given them *Power* TO KNOW *who are truly penitent.* Elſe 'tis a Power to do nothing, for till they *know* them to be truly penitent, (*i. e.* till they can *ſearch their Hearts*) they cannot *authoritatively* abſolve them: But if they cannot do it till *then*, they cannot do it *at all.* Beſides,

3. If *the Prieſt* has really from CHRIST this Authority and Power, *the Manner* in which he is here ordered to apply it, is moſt certainly *wrong.* For upon the Sinner's *confeſſing* his Faults, and *profeſſing* his Faith and ſincere Repentance, the Prieſt is ordered moſt *ſolemnly* and *authoritatively* to abſolve him. But are any Promiſes or Profeſſions which a Sinner makes in that Diſtreſs, a *proper Ground* for ſuch an abſolute authoritative Abſolution? Are not the moſt profligate, when *Death* is thought to approach, wont to feel their Conſcience troubled with many *weighty Matters*, ready to confeſs their Sins, to expreſs the deepeſt Remorſe, and to vow Amendment if ſpared? But when the Danger is paſt, is there one of a Thouſand that remembers his Vows, and that returns not to his Sins with as keen an Appetite as ever? Do not you Gentlemen of the *Clergy*, loudly complain of this, when you preſs to *preſent* Repentance, and warn us not to truſt to the Sorrows of a ſick Bed? but notwithſtanding all this, when the *ſick Sinner* ſends for you, confeſſes his Sins, profeſſes Repentance, and deſires Abſolution, you are directed and required with all poſſible Solemnity, even *in the Name of the* FATHER, SON, *and* HOLY GHOST, *authoritatively*

to

to abſolve him from ALL *his Crimes*, how many or great ſoever they have been, and to declare him *fully forgiven*. Strange! That you can preſume in the Name of the *ſacred Trinity*, to ASSURE a Man that he *is abſolved* from all his Sins, when at the ſame Time you *know* yourſelves NOT SURE that he is abſolved! Yea, when the *only Grounds* of your doing it, are but the ſame *Signs of Repentance* which a thouſand Sinners give, who are nevertheleſs held faſt under the Power and Guilt of Sin! What would you call that Man, Sir, who in a Court of human Judicature, ſhould *moſt ſolemnly* affirm, and declare in the *Name of* GOD, an *important Fact* to be done, which yet at the ſame Time he is *not ſure* is done; or who ſhould call Heaven to witneſs to *the certainty* of that, which he is not *at all* certain of? But is it leſs dangerous, or leſs reproachful, thus to trifle and collude in *eternal* Things than in *temporal*; in the Court of *Almighty* GOD, than in that of the *King?*

I cannot ſay, Sir, in what Light *you* view this *Order* of your Church, nor what Obedience *you* pay it, but am humbly of Opinion, that 'tis this *ſtraining* the *ſacerdotal* Character, which has ſunk it into ſome Contempt; and that if it continues thus *ſtrained*, lower, much lower, 'twill continue to ſink. For when Men ſee you claiming from GOD, *awful* and *high* Powers, which they are ſure GOD has never given you; and hear you with great Solemnity *authoritatively* abſolving in the Name of the *Holy Trinity*, when at the ſame Time they know the *Holy Trinity* never gave you *any Authority* ſo to do, how natural is it for them to deride the *prieſtly Character* on which theſe Claims are founded, and to treat your other Offices with Ridicule and Diſreſpect?

And now, Sir, having preſented you with ſome of the *true Grounds* of our diſſent, many of which you have not at all, and the reſt but ſlightly touch-

ed, in your *three* long Letters, I proceed to your Attempts to *reflect back* our own Pleas and Objections upon ourſelves, and to prove us *ſelf-condemned.*

Here you complain—" that you walk almoſt " without Light—that our Churches are ſo ſecret " in all their Ways, that there is ſcarce any know- " ing what they are—that you muſt grope and feel " for them as in the Dark—and that you are ſome- " thing like one fighting with a Ghoſt *." This ſeems, indeed, a very juſt Deſcription of your Caſe, for you greatly miſrepreſent both our *Principles* and our *Practice.* But the Blame of *this Darkneſs*, Sir, be wholly to yourſelf. Are not our Churches *open?* Our Prayers, our Sermons, our Sacraments and Ordinations performed in View of the World, that whoever pleaſes may come and ſee our Manner in them?

But " we have no common Rules of Diſcipline " and Worſhip, by which we hold ourſelves " obliged to walk; at leaſt none made public and " laid before the World, for your Examination " and Diſcuſſion †." Yes, Sir, we have an excellent COMMON RULE *of Diſcipline and Worſhip*, by which all our Churches *hold themſelves obliged to walk*, even *the ſame* which CHRIST and *his Apoſtles*, the great Founders of the *Chriſtian Church*, originally drew up, publiſhed, and eſtabliſhed for it; and which they left as a *common Rule*, the ONLY common Rule, and a PERFECT common Rule, for the Uſe of all future Ages, *viz.* the HOLY SCRIPTURES: *This* therefore you may diſcuſs with all the Freedom you pleaſe.

But to deſcend to ſome of the many Inſtances in which you much *miſrepreſent* us. Your very great Miſtake, as to our *impoſing* SITTING at the *Lord's-ſupper*, I have ſhewn in my former Letter. You farther affirm—" That it is *generally* held amongſt " us, that the Sacrament is for none but *perfect* " and

* Let. II. pag. 4. † Ibid.

" and *conſummate* Chriſtians, ſuch as can give a " particular Account of their Converſion *." Here you *walk*, Sir, *without Light*. There is not a *ſingle Church*, I am perſuaded, amongſt the *Diſſenters* in the whole Kingdom, hardly a *ſingle Perſon*, who hath *this Notion* of the Sacrament. We *univerſally* hold, that *every* ſincere Chriſtian has a Right to the *Lord's-Table*.

" As to the Duty of *Faſting*, you ſay, if you " are not *mightily deceived*, it is thrown away " amongſt us. You have not met with any Ser- " mons or Treatiſes of our Miniſters, ſhewing the " Obligations, and preſſing its Practice upon the " People; nor have you ever heard of its being " practiſed, even by the ſtricteſt and devouteſt " amongſt us †." You are *mightily deceived*. Sir, a great deal *too mightily*, for one who ſets up for ſo ſevere *a Cenſor* of his Brethren. Amongſt many others, I refer you only to a moſt excellent Diſcourſe on *Faſting*, in *Bennet*'s *Chriſtian Oratory*, Vol. II. which I am ſure you cannot read without admiring it bluſhing, and condemning your own Temerity.

You are pleaſed to give us alſo a very *grave* and *ſevere* Reprehenſion for *Standing*, and not *Kneeling* at our public Prayers; and ſay, " It is little leſs " than *impoſed* upon our People, inſomuch that " ſhould any one *preſume* to kneel in our Churches, " we ſhould *certainly* cenſure and condemn him for " it ‡.—That *your Church* has as good Right to " impoſe *Kneeling* in the public Worſhip upon her " Members, as *Diſſenters* have to *impoſe* it upon " their Children and Servants in their *Family* De- " votions §—And that we ALWAYS practiſe it in " *private* ‖" You are extremely unhappy, Sir, in your Intelligence about this *ſtrange* People, whom you have taken upon you to *reprehend*. How came you to know, what their Poſture of Worſhip *al-*

* Let. I. pag. 52. † Let. I. pag. 65, 66. ‡ Let. II. pag. 65, 67. § Let. I. pag. 28. ‖ Let. II. pag. 68.

ways is in PRIVATE? Have they taken you into their *Closets?* For my own Part, I pretend not to have been much with them at their secret Devotions, and therefore will not *pronounce* with *such Assurance* as you do upon the Point; but am very strongly persuaded they practise *variously* in this Matter and do not always kneel.

As to their *Families* and *Churches*, though I have been present *at prayers* in a great Number of both, (which you, I presume, Sir, never have been) I assure you, I never once saw nor heard any Thing like *the Impositions* you mention. In their *Family* Devotions some *stand*, and some *kneel*, according as their Inclination and Convenience serves. And in their *public Assemblies*, many kneel at Prayer, I believe, the whole Kingdom over, without it ever entering into the Thoughts of their *Fellow-Worshippers*, to take the least Offence thereat.

You tell me "you can name a considerable "Congregation amongst us, which is greatly scan- "dalized—and has taken a great and general Of- "fence, at one of its Members kneeling at pub- "lic Prayer*." But as in many other Points, Sir, 'tis very *notorious* you have been *ill served* by your *Informers*, as to our Customs and Worship; you must give me leave to think, that they have *here* also made *too free* with your Credulity. That we have *weak* Brethren amongst us, and those not a few, I am very ready to own. But a Congregation, a *considerable* Congregation too, so weak as to take a *great* and *general* Offence at such a Trifle as this! You must excuse me, if I cannot easily admit it. I think you will do Justice, Sir, to *name* the Congregation, that it may either *purge* itself of the Reproach, or stand *corrected* before the World, for its *unchristian* and *imposing* Temper; and learn to act more consistent with that *Liberty* and *Right* of private Judgment, which as *Dissenters* they profess.

No

* Let. II. pag. 68.

No, Sir, *Diſſenters* are not for *binding*, where GOD has *left free*. They are *our Brethren* of another Church, who think themſelves capable of *mending* CHRIST's *Inſtitutions*; and not content to uſe them in the *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity* in which DIVINE WISDOM left them, muſt needs *embelliſh* and *improve* them by *Additions* of their own.

Theſe *Additions* of your own, for Inſtance, KNEELING *at public Prayers*, you are ſo ſurprizingly *ſanguine* as to repreſent as "a great *Improvement* of "public Worſhip, and as adding a *natural Splen-* "*dor* and *Beauty* to it—that our Worſhip is *debaſed* "for want of it—that *kneeling* is a *more* humble and "honourable Poſture—*much more* expreſſive of our "profound Reverence of GOD.—And the humble "Poſture of *kneeling*, NATURE itſelf ſo plainly "dictates, and ſo powerfully prompts us to, that "a Man, if he were left to himſelf, whenever— "he makes his Requeſts known to GOD, will "hardly do it in any other—unleſs when ſome *af-* "*fected Reſtraint* is laid upon him*." How towering a Flight! You do not pretend to ſay, that either CHRIST or *his Apoſtles*, ever enjoined, or conſtantly, or moſtly, *uſed* KNEELING at public Prayer; you mention ſeveral Inſtances from *Scripture*, where STANDING was the Poſture of ſome of the *moſt ſolemn* Addreſſes to *Almighty* GOD—*Abraham* STOOD *before the Lord* †, when he offered up that humble Interceſſion for *Sodom*. Of the *Levites* and *all the Prieſts*, 'tis particularly recorded, that they STOOD UP; and all the People are alſo called upon to STAND UP, *and bleſs the Lord their* GOD, in that ſolemn Addreſs to Heaven, *Nehem.* ix. 2, 3, 4, 5. An Addreſs of deep Humiliation, Confeſſion, Deprecation, and Covenanting with GOD, one of the *moſt ſolemn* that ſtands upon ſacred Record; 'tis here no leſs than *four* ſeveral Times expreſly mentioned, that STANDING was *the Poſture* in

* Let. II. pag. 66, 67, 69, 73. † Gen. xviii. 22.

in which their Worſhip was offered up. *Moſes* and *Samuel* are repreſented as STANDING *before* GOD, when making their moſt humble and importunate Interceſſions with him, *Jer.* xv. 1. When *our* SAVIOUR in his Parable repreſents *two Men praying in the Temple*, STANDING is the Poſture in which he deſcribes them, *Luke* xviii. 10, 11. Yea, himſelf in expreſs Words has, if not actually injoined, yet moſt fully declared his *Approbation* of this Geſture, *Mark* xi. 25. *When ye* STAND *praying, forgive.* Finally, when the *primitive* Chriſtians, it is acknowledged on all Hands, *every* Lord's Day, and at all other Times betwixt *Eaſter* and *Whitſuntide*, univerſally *prayed* STANDING, and NEVER *kneeled* at their public Devotions. (Conſequently, by the Way, not at the *Lord's-ſupper.*) "*Die Dominico nefas ducimus*, &c. ſays *Tertullian**: "*On the* LORD'S-DAY *we account it* A SIN *to wor-*"*ſhip* KNEELING; *which Cuſtom we alſo obſerve* "*from* Eaſter *to* Whitſuntide."——With all this Evidence glaring full in your Face, Sir, you have the *Aſſurance*, ſhall I call it, or does it deſerve ſome *other* Name, very ſmartly to reprehend us for STANDING at our public Prayers; and to call it *a Debaſement of our Worſhip*—to affirm that *kneeling is a* MORE *humble and honourable Poſture*—MUCH MORE *expreſſive of our profound Reverence of* GOD—*A great* IMPROVEMENT *of public Worſhip, and that it adds a natural* BEAUTY *and* SPLENDOR *to it*—Surprizingly enthuſiaſtic! What *Abraham*, and *Moſes*, and *Samuel*, and *Nehemiah*, and all the *Prieſts*, and *Jewiſh People*, DEBASE the divine Worſhip, when they STOOD *before* GOD, and made their ſolemn Addreſſes to him! Yea, what CHRIST himſelf too *debaſe* it, by directing Men to STAND *praying!*

Had *you* happened, Sir, to have been of the Council of *the Apoſtles*, you could have helped them

* De Coron. Milit. pag. 340.

them to eſtabliſh *Chriſtian Worſhip* upon a *greatly improved, a more beautiful and perfect* Plan; and have INJOIN'D this MORE *humble and honourable* Poſture, this ADDITIONAL *Splendor and Beauty* to public Prayer, which it never came into *their* Minds to INJOIN the Diſciples.—But as our Bibles at preſent ſtand; and GOD and *Jeſus Chriſt* have left us at full Liberty to offer up our Prayers either *Standing* or *Kneeling*, you will excuſe us if we are not ſo ſtruck with your *additional Beauty* as to give ourſelves up blindfold to its Charms.

But it ſeems we are *inconſiſtent*, in condemning *ſome* of your Ceremonies, when at the ſame Time we readily conform ourſelves to *others:* yea, have *many Ceremonies* allow'd and practiſed amongſt ourſelves. "Such, you aver, we have, tho' we ſeem "not to know it: Such as Uncovering our Head "when we enter either your Churches, or our own "Meetings *." But you are ſtill "*walking in the* "*Dark*," Sir, as you juſtly repreſent yourſelf, "and *encountering with Ghoſts.*" The *Diſſenters* have no ſuch Cuſtom of *Uncovering their Heads* when they enter into their *Meeting-places*, unleſs in Time of Worſhip; no Notion of paying Reverence to *Timber* and *Walls*; no Miniſters amongſt them who have *Senſe* or *Grace* enough to *conſecrate* a Piece of Ground: And when they uſe this Ceremony at Entering *your Churches*, 'tis, I aſſure you, purely as a *civil*, not at all as a *religious* Ceremony; a *Compliment* paid, not in the leaſt to the *Building*, but entirely to our *good Brethren*, whom we would not needleſly offend.

"*Kneeling at Ordination*," the next Ceremony you mention, tho' generally uſed amongſt us, was never I believe *impoſed.* If the Perſon to be ordained ſcrupled *that Poſture*, he would, without all Doubt, be permitted *to ſtand.*

As

* Let. III. p. 7.

As for " the *ſecret Ceremonies* which you *ſuſpect*, " but will not poſitively affirm, to paſs at ſtriking " the Covenant betwixt us and our Paſtors," which you once and again mention, let your *Suſpicions* on that Head, Sir, give you no further Pain. I aſſure you I neither know, nor have ever heard of any ſuch *Covenanting* now practiſed amongſt us: And am perſuaded, that of all our Churches, not one in five hundred obſerve any ſuch Thing.

" In Balance againſt your *Surplice* you put, what " you call, the Ceremony of our *long ſweeping* " *Cloak* *." But the leaſt Attention would have ſhewn the *two Caſes* to be far from *parallel*. Our Miniſters are at full Liberty either to *uſe* or *diſuſe* the *one:* Are yours *ſo* as to the *other?* Did you ever hear of any learned pious *Paſtors* amongſt us ſilenc'd, rejected, and cruelly impriſon'd for refuſing the *ſweeping Cloak?* But, have you never heard of your *Hoopers*, *Sampſons*, *Humpherys*, and an hundred other Miniſters, Men of diſtinguiſh'd Learning and Uſefulneſs in *your Church*, who have been *ſwept* from their Stations in it; ſilenc'd, confined, and grievouſly harraſs'd, *only* for ſcrupling your *Surplice* and *Cap?* Have you never heard of *many Churches* forſaken, and ſhut up in *London*, and of numerous Congregations, both in City and Country, deprived for a long while of Sacraments and public Worſhip, by the rigorous Impoſition of *your Habits* on their *Miniſters?* And if the moſt celebrated Divine was now to offer to officiate in any of your Churches, but refuſed to *wear a Surplice*, muſt he not, by your *Canons*, be ſet aſide and refuſed? Had *our Cloak* been the Occaſion of a thouſandth Part of the Diſtractions and Confuſions in the Church, as *your Surplice* has been, and *ſwept* ſo many worthy Perſons from their Miniſtry and Livings in it; we ſhould have had the Grace, I hope, ſoon to treat it as a *Beſome of Deſtruction*, and to have doom'd it to the Flames. But

* Let. III. p. 42

But " the giving the *Chriſtian Name* in Baptiſm " to the Perſon baptiſed, you very ſeriouſly urge " as another ſolid Argument of *Ceremonies* amongſt " us," and aſk, " Is it not an *Addition* to the Sa- " crament? Is it not an *Impoſition*?" You add, " Now I ſee you ſmile *" Excuſe me, Sir, I could not help it! your Argument is quite *new*, and really ſurpriſed me with its Solidity and Weight. Yes, Sir, I own it an *Addition*, an *Impoſition*, and a very *ridiculous* one too. And ſhould any Miniſter of ours pretend to *add*, or to *impoſe* this Ceremony upon his People; and forbid them to call the Child by *its Name* till it was baptiſed; you may be aſ- ſured he would ſoon meet with the Diſregard and Contempt his Impertinence deſerved. When *you* baptiſe *adult* Perſons, do you *give* their Names in that Ceremony? Or do you not *only* call them by Names *before* given? The ſame, I apprehend, is the Caſe as to *Children* amongſt us.

As for the *Ceremonies in Marriage*; theſe, you juſtly obſerve, we conſider only as *civil* Ceremonies, and the Prieſt as a *civil Officer*, appointed by the Magiſtrate to officiate in this Affair. And what- ever *decent Rites* the Magiſtrate preſcribes in Matters of a *civil* Nature, we think it our Duty reverently to obſerve. But, " the Magiſtrate preſcribe!" you with Aſtoniſhment reply. " For GOD's Sake how " does the Magiſtrate here preſcribe the Rites and " Ceremonies of *Marriage*, more than the *other* " Rites and Ceremonies of the Church†!" But could not a Gentleman of your Diſcernment perceive a Difference here? Is the Form of *Marriage* any where *Inſtituted* by *our* SAVIOUR; or a Part of *Chriſ- tian Worſhip*; as Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper are? May we not therefore *own* the Power of the *civil Magiſtrate* to appoint *Rites* and *Forms* for the Celebration of the *one*, but not ſo as to the *other*? By preſcribing Rites of *Marriage*, the Magiſtrate

* Let. III. p. 10. † Let. III. p. 6.

acts in Character, and rules in *his own Kingdom:* but by *authoritatively* prescribing Rites in *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, we humbly apprehend, he extends beyond the Sphere assign'd him by GOD, and attempts to rule in CHRIST's *Kingdom:* and that therefore here we are *to obey* GOD, *rather than Man.*

You further ask with surprise—"What *civil* Ceremonies in the Church of GOD! in the midst of "the Administration of a divine Institution: intermix'd with pastoral Exhortations, holy Prayers, "solemn Benedictions*."——But why, Sir, so astonish'd? Did you never *take an* OATH in a civil Court of Judicature? And did not the Person who administred this SACRED *Rite*, give you a *pastoral Exhortation*, accompanied with an *holy Prayer*, and a *solemn Benediction*, piously invoking on you GOD's Blessing and Help? And as to *the* PLACE, which you call the *Church of* GOD, where *Marriage* is solemnized; you might have pleased to remember, that the *Consecration* of Timber, and the *Sanctity* of Walls, is a Point too sublime for *Dissenters* Understandings; and that in their Opinion all Places are alike holy, and that no Building on Earth merits the high Honour of being called the *Church of* GOD.

The same Reply we make as to the *Ceremonies of Burial*, our Compliance with which you also briskly *retort* upon us. Is *Burial of the Dead*, Sir, a CHRISTIAN *Institution?* Any Part of the Religion or Worship of *Christ?* Is it not purely a *political* or *civil* Thing? Yes; and as such *only* we view it: and consider the Person who officiates, as one *appointed* to this Office, *directed*, *instructed*, and *maintained* by the STATE.

But as you are here professedly "*answering our* "*great and popular Objections*," how came you, Sir, to slide over, in consummate Silence, one of the *greatest* and *most popular*, to this *Office of Burial?* which, indeed, is not *ours* only, but an Objection of

* Let. III. p. 6.

of ſome of the moſt illuſtrious Members of your own Church. Were you conſcious the *objected Paſſages* were incapable of Defence, and therefore prudently let them drop?

There are but *three Caſes*, you know, Sir, in which your Church *refuſes* this ſolemn *Office of Burial*, *viz.* to thoſe who die unbaptiſed, to Self-Murtherers, and to thoſe who are under Sentence of the greater Excommunication. As for *all other Perſons* which are brought to the Church-yard, it very ſtrictly *commands* you, even under pain of *Suſpenſion*, by *Canon* 68, that you uſe over them the Form preſcribed by the *Common Prayer*. Now, hence it comes to paſs, that over ſome of the moſt *abandon'd* and *profligate* of Mankind; over Men who have been cut down in a Courſe of open Impiety by a ſudden and untimely Death; or who even fell by the Hand of *Juſtice* for ſome black and atrocious Crime; over *theſe*, I ſay, your Church, and I ſay it with Aſtoniſhment, directs and commands you moſt ſolemnly to declare, *That almighty* GOD *of his* GREAT MERCY, *has taken to himſelf the Soul of this your dear Brother.* You *give* GOD *hearty Thanks that it hath pleaſed him to deliver him out of the Miſeries of this ſinful World:* And you *pray* GOD, *that when you yourſelves ſhall depart out of this Life, you may* REST IN CHRIST, *as your* HOPE *is this your Brother doth.* This is what your Church *commands* you ſolemnly to ſay over EVERY *Perſon* brought to be buried, the *three Caſes* above excepted. So that if the Man happen'd to be *killed* in the very Act of committing *Murder*, *Adultery*, or a *Rape:* Or for either of theſe Crimes dies upon the *Gallows* an impenitent hardened Wretch, whom *Vengeance* ſuffer'd not to live; yet concerning him you are to declare, that *Almighty* GOD *hath in* GREAT MERCY *taken him to himſelf:* Tho' he died a Victim to *public Juſtice*, and was taken away *in Wrath*, You are to *give* GOD *hearty Thanks*, *that he hath taken this your* BROTHER *out of the Miſeries of this*

ſinful World: Tho' you have the ſtrongeſt Reaſon to believe, that he is gone down to Realms of greater Miſery below. And you are to profeſs before GOD *that you* HOPE *the Man* RESTS IN CHRIST, and pray that you yourſelves may reſt in Chriſt in the ſame manner as this your Brother doth: when you have all the Grounds in the World to think he *died in his Sins*, and is therefore not gone to be *with* CHRIST, where nothing that is defiled can ever be admitted. Strange! and extremely ſhocking! what can the People think, Sir! what muſt *Infidels* and *Deiſts* think! when they hear you in the Morning denouncing from the *Scriptures* certain Death and Deſtruction from the *Preſence* of GOD, to all vicious and corrupt Perſons; and aſſuring them that *without Holineſs* NO MAN *ſhall ſee the Lord:* But in the Evening from the *Common Prayer*, ſhall hear YOU, the SAME PERSON, declaring *before* GOD your HOPE of the *eternal Happineſs* of one of the moſt debauch'd and profligate Men your Pariſh affords; and ſending him hence with all the lofty Expreſſions of Confidence and Hope, as you would a Perſon of the moſt ſhining and exemplary Life.

Do you imagine, Sir, People do not think? Can you wonder DEISM *prevails?* That the *Prieſthood* is ridiculed? And that your *good Sermons* are no more effectual to reform a corrupt World? To me this appears (and doubtleſs it does the ſame to thouſands of your own Church) a moſt indecent Proſtitution of your *ſacred* Character and Office; a Trifling and Prevarication in Things of everlaſting Moment; and a fatal Snare to the Souls of Men: Who ſeeing their debauch'd Neighbour diſmiſs'd to the other World with ſuch *Confidence* of his good Eſtate, ſuppreſs their juſt Fears, and ſay, *I ſhall have Peace, tho' I add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt.*

But there is a further very *ſtrange* and *extraordinary* Circumſtance attending this Matter, *viz.* That it makes your Church perform, not to ſay *a Miracle,*

racle, but ſomething very like it, if not greater than that, for it *damns* and *ſaves* the ſame individual Perſons. Whom it damns when *living*, it ſaves when *dead*. *Arians* and *Socinians*, you know, Sir, your Church declares WITHOUT DOUBT *to periſh everlaſtingly*. But let theſe very Men *die*, and your Church as ſolemnly declares that GOD *hath in* GREAT MERCY *taken them to himſelf*, and that it HOPES *they* REST IN CHRIST. Can any thing be more tranſcendent and marvellous than this! That the Man whom I pronounce WITHOUT DOUBT *to be damned*, I yet HOPE *that he is ſaved*, *i. e.* I hope *without* Hope.

But you would eſtabliſh, not only the *Uſe*, but the Church's *divine Right*, of MAKING *Ceremonies* from the Inſtance of the *holy Kiſs* *. " The *Kiſs of* " *Charity* uſed in the Apoſtolic Church, you aſk, " was it a Rite of divine Appointment, or was it " not?" I anſwer you, that as I apprehend this Kiſs of Charity cannot properly be called *a divine Inſtitution*, nor be ſaid to be *ordained* by the Apoſtles. The greeting with a Kiſs, was an ancient eſtabliſhed Uſage, not only amongſt the *Jews*, but the *Gentile* Nations alſo. This Uſage therefore, or Ceremony, was not ordained by the Apoſtles, but only by their Advice regulated and directed to a moral and religious End. 'Tis as if they had ſaid, 'Tis your Cuſtom when you meet, to ſalute each other with a Kiſs, ſee that it be a pure, a chaſte, or holy Kiſs, a Token of unfeigned Charity, Friendſhip and Peace.

" But if this Ceremony of the *holy Kiſs*, was *not* " of divine Appointment (which probably, you " ſay, is the Truth of the Caſe, but a merely ec- " cleſiaſtical prudential Inſtitution, *ordained* by the " Apoſtles without any Precept from the Lord, or " any particular Direction of the *Holy Spirit*." —— Then, Sir, I without the leaſt Heſitation ſay, it was

* Let. II. pag. 2.

was not at all obligatory as *a Law* upon the Consciences of *Christians*; they might or they might not practise it, without sinning against God. Even *the Apostles* had *no Dominion* over the Faith and Practice of *Christians*, but what was given them by the *special* Presence and Spirit of CHRIST, the *only* Lawgiver, Lord, and Sovereign of the Church. They were to teach only the Things which he should command them. Whatever they *injoined* under the Influence of *that* SPIRIT, was to be considered and obeyed as the *Injunction* of CHRIST. But if they *injoined* any Thing in the Church (which I can by no means admit) *without* the peculiar Influence and Direction of *this Spirit*, (*i. e.* as merely fallible unassisted Men) in that Case their Injunctions had *no Authority* over Conscience: Every Man's *own Reason* had Authority to examine and discuss their Injunctions, and as they approved themselves to his *private Judgment*, to observe them, or not. Should we grant then what you ask —"That the Church in the present Age, has the "same Authority and Power as the Church in the "apostolic Age, considered as not being under "any immediate and extraordinary Guidance of "the Holy Ghost."—What will you gain by it? This same Authority and Power, is you see, Sir, really *no* Power nor Authority at all.

I proceed next "to the Point of DISCIPLINE, "the Want of which you say, is objected to *your* "*Church*; but you will represent the real State of "it, and then shew that *we* really as much want it "*ourselves**." We will attend *your own* Account of it, which to be sure is not too severe. You acknowledge "that the *Discipline* of the Church is "of *great Moment* towards the Edification of its "Members; and that the Fault is *unpardonable* "when Church Governors let it fall, through a "supine Carelessness and Neglect—That there is a "great

* Let. III. pag. 12.

" great Proſtration of Diſcipline in the Church of " *England*—That it is ruined amongſt you—That " the Diſtempers of the Times are evidently too " ſtrong for it—That thoſe who ſit at the Helm, " find it prudent not to bear up too much againſt " the Impetuoſity of the Storm, but to give Way " till the Madneſs of the People be ſtill—That the " Diſcipline of the Church has not been carried to " any Degree of Perfection—And now lies under " a *general* Relaxation.—That your People are " often indulg'd in all their unreaſonable Demands " and diſorderly Ways, to prevent their putting in " Execution their Threats, *that they will go to the* " *Meeting*—And finally, That you have at leaſt, " the Shadow and Form of *Diſcipline*, and truſt in. " God that *theſe dry Bones will one Day live**."

This, it muſt be owned, is very ingenuouſly and frankly ſpoken. And can you blame then the *Diſſenters*, Sir, for joining themſelves to *Churches*, where that *godly Diſciptine* is obſerved, which you confeſs to be of ſo great Moment to *the Edification* of Chriſtian People; and which your Church is *continually* WISHING, but never attempts *to have reſtored*. But here you *retort*, and intimate *as great a* Want of Diſcipline amongſt us. " What are there " no ſcandalous Sinners, you aſk†, no Fornicators, " Adulterers, Extortioners, *&c.* received into your " Churches! I muſt beg your Pardon if I demur " upon this. For I could never perceive the Doors " of the Meeting were ever ſhut againſt any. And " if ſuch profligate Perſons be not admitted to *ſit* " *at the Lord's Table*, they need not fear being ad- " mitted to all other Parts of your Worſhip."

And is not this, Sir, exactly right? Ought not our Church-doors to be always *kept open*, that whoever will may come, and be Witneſs to our Way of Worſhip. Such *profligate* Perſons therefore may come,

* Let. III. pag. 12, 13, 14, 17, 22, 28. † Let. III. pag. 23.

come, if they pleaſe, and hear their Sins *reproved*, and be exhorted to Repentance and Amendment of Life. They are *then*, where they ought to be, under the preaching of the Word; the *Means* appointed by GOD, to convince and reclaim the profligate and corrupt. Were not *the Doors* of the Church at *Corinth* kept *open* in the *Apoſtles* Days, for *Infidels* to come in, and be *preſent at* their Worſhip. *Vid.* 1 *Cor.* xiv. 23. But to *the Table of the* LORD, to partake of the Children's Bread, you ſeem convinced that in *our Churches*, ſuch profligate Perſons are not ſuffered to come. And is not this the *true Order* and *Diſcipline* of the Chriſtian Church? But—Is it the ſame, Sir, in *your Church?* Are not ſome of the moſt profane and abandoned of Men, Rakes, Debauchees, Blaſphemers of GOD, and Scoffers at all Religion, often ſeen upon their Knees around *your Communion Table*, eating the *Children's Bread*, and partaking of the *holy Elements* to qualify for *a Poſt?* Dare your Miniſters refuſe them! No, they dare not refuſe the moſt impious *Blaſphemer* the *three Kingdoms* afford, when he comes to *demand it* as a Qualification for an Office in the Army or Fleet.

And if in any *other Caſe*, the Prieſt *denies* the Sacrament to the moſt *infamous* Sinner dwelling in his Pariſh, if the Man, upon an Appeal to the *eccleſiaſtical Court*, can ſecure the Favour of the *Lay-Chancellor*, he may ſecurely defy both the Miniſter and the Biſhop to keep him from the Lord's Table. The *Chancellor*'s Determination ſhall ſtand in Law, though *contrary* to the *Biſhop*'s; and the Miniſter be liable to a *Suſpenſion*, for refuſing Compliance; and if he is contumacious, and will not give the Man the Sacrament, even to *Excommunication* itſelf. How, Sir, do you reconcile *this* with your affirming, "That your *Pariſh Prieſt* has as much Power "as any *Preſbyterian* or *congregational Miniſter* to "repel open and ſcandalous Sinners from the "Lord's

" Lord's Table*?" Or how with your " Repre-
" ſenting the *Lay-Chancellor* as a Perſon *only aſ-*
" *ſumed* by the Biſhop, not to do any Act that is
" *purely ſpiritual*, but only to be his *Aſſiſtant* in his
" eccleſiaſtical and judicial Proceedings†?"

Is not the Chancellor *ſupreme* and *uncontrouled* in his Court, not liable to be reſtrained or directed by the *Biſhop* in his *judicial Proceedings?* Does he not *finally* and *abſolutely* determine on Caſes of *Excommunication*, ſovereignly *direct* who ſhall be *received* to, and who *caſt out* from Chriſtian Fellowſhip and Worſhip at the *Table of the* LORD? And is not *this* an Act as *purely ſpiritual*, as important and momentous, as any done in the Church? Muſt not *his Sentence* take Place without Controul, and is the *Miniſter* in publiſhing it any other than *his Servant*, appointed by Law to put it in Execution?

Will you pleaſe to hear, Sir, the Sentiments of a great *Prelate*‡ of your own Church, upon the Point in Debate.——" If there be any Thing in
" the Office of a Biſhop to be challenged *peculiar*
" to themſelves, certainly it ſhould be this (ſpeak-
" ing of *Excommunication*) yet this is in a Manner
" quite relinquiſhed to their *Chancellors*; Laymen,
" who have no more Capacity to ſentence or ab-
" ſolve a Sinner, than to diſſolve the Heavens or
" the Earth. And this pretended Power of the
" *Chancellor*, is ſometimes purchaſed with a Sum
" of Money. *Their Money periſh with them!* Good
" GOD! what a horrid Abuſe is this of the divine
" Authority! But this notorious Tranſgreſſion is
" excuſed, as they think, by this, that a Miniſter
" called the *Biſhop's Surrogate*, but is indeed the
" *Chancellor's Servant*, choſen, called, and placed
" there by him, to be his Crier in the Court, no
" better; that when he hath examined, heard,
" and ſentenced the Cauſe, then the Miniſter, for-

" ſooth,

* Let. III. pag. 33. † Ibid. pag. 38. ‡ Dr. *Crofts*, Biſhop of *Hereford*, *Naked Truth*, &c. pag. 58.

" ſooth, pronounces the Sentence. Juſt as if the " Rector of a Pariſh Church ſhould exclude any " of his Congregation, and lock him out of the " Church, then comes the Clerk, ſhews and " jingles the Keys, that all may take Notice that " he is excluded. And by this his Authority, the " *Chancellor* takes upon him to ſentence not only " *Laymen*, but *Clergymen* alſo brought into his " Court for any Delinquency. And in the Court of " *Arches*, they ſentence even *Biſhops* themſelves."

" I remember when the Biſhop of *Wells*, hear- " ing of a Cauſe corruptly managed, and coming " into Court to rectify it, the Chancellor Dr. *Duck*, " fairly and mannerly bid him *be gone*, for he had " no Power there to act any Thing; and there- " withal pulled out his Patent, ſealed by this " Biſhop's Predeceſſor, which frighted the poor " Biſhop out of the Court."——Behold! this is the Perſon, Sir, whom you have the Courage to repreſent *as only aſſumed by the Biſhop, not to do any Act that is purely* SPIRITUAL *but* ONLY *to be his* ASSISTANT *in his judicial Proceedings.*

But as we are now upon the Head of *Diſcipline*, and the Law called the TEST, is a Battery which has beat down *all its Fences* around your Church, and you are a zealous Advocate for *that* LAW, you will permit me here, Sir, to enlarge a little upon *that Point:* And to aſk—How you can *bear* to ſee the terrible Deſolation it has made of your *godly Diſcipline*, without Reſentment and Grief? Can you be jealous, Sir, for the Proſperity and Honour of your Church, and yet *patiently* view it lying in this *polluted* and *common* State? Its Incloſures broken up, and a Way opened *by Law* for the moſt flagitious of Men, for *Atheiſts*, profeſſed *Deiſts* and the moſt *open* and *avowed* Sinners, to lie ſecurely in its Boſom, to ſuck at its Breaſts, to be numbered and cheriſhed amongſt its holieſt and moſt beloved Children, and to be acknowledged before the World

World as honeſt and good *Chriſtians*, by being *ſuffered* to come boldly to the *Table of the* LORD.

But why do I ſay *ſuffered*? Does not your Church by the *Force* of this Law, even *compel them to come in?* Many of the unhappy Perſons, conſcious of their *unfitneſs*, would gladly *draw back*. Knowing themſelves perhaps, either to *diſbelieve* the Truth, or elſe to *live in open Violation* of the Laws of *Chriſtianity*, they are loth to add to their other Crimes this *Prevarication* with *Almighty* GOD, and Affront to JESUS CHRIST, and thereby to run a dreadful Riſque of *eating and drinking Judgment to themſelves*. But, their *All* lies at Stake: They muſt *qualify*, or be given up to Beggary and Want. Away therefore with *Scruples!* They ruſh to the Lord's Table, and partake of the *ſacred Elements* with Conſciences and Characters all covered with Guilt.

You will ſay, perhaps, it is their own Fault, they might have *refuſed* to come. They might, indeed, if they would have loſt their Poſts, their Subſiſtence, their Bread.—But can *the Church* reaſonably expect ſuch Sacrifices as theſe, from Men of corrupt Minds? Is *ſhe* then in *no Fault*, in laying Men under ſuch ſtrong, almoſt *invincible* Temptations, to this odious Hypocriſy and Profanation of *holy Things?* Is ſhe not highly culpable, for opening her Boſom to receive Men of *impure Characters* to all the *ſacred* Privileges, Liberties, and Honours, which belong only to *ſincere Chriſtians?* Yea, for owning before the World as worthy and good Chriſtians, *Perſons* whom the *World* ſees, and whom *the Church* herſelf cannot but ſee to blaſpheme the Name of CHRIST, and to live in avowed Contempt of his Authority and Laws?

And what Relief, Sir, has the unhappy Miniſter, of whom as *Steward in* GOD's *Houſe*, *it is required that he be found* FAITHFUL, and who is to *anſwer* for his Conduct to his *great* MASTER hereafter?

What Relief, I ask, has he, when the most *veteran Debauchee*, shall come and demand from him *these Pledges* of Christian Fellowship, and of GOD's paternal Love? Truly, none at all: He must receive him as a Child of GOD, and a dearly beloved Brother to the *Table of* CHRIST, or have *an Action* commenced against him, and be condemned perhaps in Damages more than he is worth.

As much therefore as you are concerned for the Honour of *the Church*, and for the Interest, Reputation, and Comfort of its *Clergy*, so much you ought to wish and zealously promote the Repeal of *this Law*. A Law, which whatever was its original Intention, hath in its Application let in like a *Flood-gate* upon your Church, the Dregs of the human Race. A Law, which though at first designed only the more effectually to prevent all Danger to the Constitution from *Papists*, hath by an unnatural Perversion of it, actually broken down *all Distinctions* established by divine Authority, betwixt *Sacred* and *Profane:* Has thrust Infidels and Profligates into the *most holy Places* of your Temple, and brings Deists and Debauchees to eat at the Lord's Table amongst the Children of his House.——Let me ask you, Sir, in the *Name of* CHRIST, our common Master and Judge, doth not *this Law*, as now enforced, occasion the most notorious *Prostitution* of an holy Sacrament of his Religion? Is not its avowed and open Tendency and Use, to *pervert* an Institution of our SAVIOUR to *Ends*, not only quite different, but even opposite to *those* for which HE appointed it? Is it not making THAT a *political* Instrument to *divide* Christians, which CHRIST instituted as a *religious* Instrument to *coalesce* and *unite* them? Must it not be highly odious and offensive to *Almighty* GOD, to see an *holy Sacrament*, which his Wisdom hath ordained for spiritual only and religious Purposes, thus prostituted, perverted, made an Engine and Tool of *State*, employed to strengthen

ſtrengthen and perpetuate *Differences* amongſt good Chriſtians; and thereby debaſed, not to *worldly* only and *ſecular*, but to much *worſe* than *worldly*, Ends?

As to myſelf, Sir, I aſſure you, tho' I think *this Law* to be a moſt unrighteous Reſtraint upon us, and an undoubted Violation of our natural Rights; yet I am far from being perſuaded that its *Repeal* would be of the leaſt Service to our Intereſt as *Diſſenters*. I doubt, and have often thought, that there is too much Truth in what you ſay— "*That* "*high Truſts, public Offices, and Court Employments,* "*would be extremely apt to corrupt us, and to make* "*practical Religion more viſibly decay*," and that it would really rather injure than ſtrengthen our Intereſt. I have never therefore, as a *Diſſenter*, been at all ſollicitous for the Repeal. No, Sir, ſo far from this, that could I allow myſelf to *hate* and *wiſh ill* to the Church, I would moſt heartily wiſh it pertinaciouſly to hold faſt this ſhameful Corruption. I would wiſh it, by no means to give up this open Profanation of the Authority and Name of *Chriſt*; this Proſtitution and Perverſion of an holy Sacrament of his Religion; this Deſtruction of all *Diſcipline*; this open Door for the Reception of the moſt Abominable and Profane to its moſt *holy Myſteries* and *Rites:* This, if I wiſh'd it ill, I would earneſtly wiſh your Church *inflexibly* to continue: not doubting but, if long continued, it will ſurely at length bring down upon it the heavy *Anger* of *Almighty* GOD; the juſt Reſentment and Jealouſy of a deſpiſed and inſulted SAVIOUR; and the deep Scorn and Contempt of all wiſe and thinking Men.

Whilſt *this Law* continues, Sir, in its preſent Application, yourſelf cannot but ſee, that your *Diſcipline* muſt neceſſarily lie ſcandalouſly *proſtrate, ruin'd, relax'd.* 'Tis impoſſible you can maintain, hardly the *Shadow* and *Form*, much leſs the *Spirit* of

of primitive eccleſiaſtick Government. Your *holy Things* muſt lie *common*, vilely trodden under Foot. Of all Perſons in the Land therefore, *the Clergy* ſhould be the *firſt*, to labour with all their Might the Repeal of this *unhappy Law*. A Law, which cannot but be ſuppoſed terribly to bear hard upon, and wound the Conſciences of many of them: and which ſubjects them to ſo ſervile a Proſtitution of their Character, as cannot but load it with great Infamy and Reproach.

You tell me*, "That you will engage, *ſimple* "*as you ſit here*, that this Law ſhall be repeal'd; "and our Incapacities removed, when we will lay "down our Enmity to the Church, that is in ſhort "to one half Part of the Conſtitution.———For "*Church* and *State* here in *England* are ſo incor- "porated and united, that they have, like the "married Pair, the ſame Friends and Enemies: "and ſtand or fall together." I cannot pretend to ſay, Sir, how *ſimple you ſat there*, when you gave us this Aſſurance, but I would to GOD you were able to *ſtand up*, and make it good. For,

1. Are you ſure that *the Church* is really any *eſſential* Part at all, much leſs the *Half Part* of the *Britiſh* CONSTITUTION: Or, that *Church* and *State* are ſo married and interwoven, that they muſt ſtand or fall together?——Many, Sir, beſides Diſſenters will think, that this is a very partial and wrong Repreſentation of our moſt excellent Frame of Government. Let any one in his Imagination *annihilate* the Form of our *preſent Church*. Let him ſuppoſe its Liturgy, Clergy, Articles, Canons, with all its Ceremonies and Rites, entirely *vaniſh'd* from the Land: its *immenſe Revenues* applied in Eaſe of our heavy Taxes, and for the Payment of the public Debts; and Preachers paid only by voluntary Contributions, as they are amongſt *us*. Would *the* STATE hereby ſuſtain ſo *eſſential* a Loſs, that it could not thence-forward

* Let. I. p. 11.

forward *poſſibly ſubſiſt?* What! would the *Britiſh* Monarchy be overthrown—Our Courts of Judicature be ſhut up—the Courſe of Law be ſtopp'd—Parliaments no more meet—Commerce and Trade ſtagnate—becauſe what you call *the Church* is no more? Romantic and abſurd! No: The Frame of our happy Government, both *civil* and *military*, might remain the *very ſame:* And you will give me leave to obſerve on the preſent Occaſion, that in one Part of this Kingdom, thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be of your Church, as to its external Polity and Ceremonies, are almoſt to a Man inveterate avowed Enemies of our happy civil Conſtitution, and have riſen in an impious Rebellion againſt his preſent Majeſty, and joined with *Spaniards*, *French*, *Italians*, and home-bred Papiſts, in their wicked Attempts to ſubvert the Proteſtant Religion and Liberties.

2. This *Deſtruction* of the Church of *England*, is what we by no Means wiſh. May GOD in mercy prevent it, by cauſing her *to ſee*, *in this her Day*, *the Things belonging to her Peace*—We bear it no Enmity; GOD *is our Witneſs.* We wiſh it from our Souls Glory, Proſperity, Purity, Peace: The Glory of being form'd according to the *perfect Plan* of the primitive *apoſtolick* Church: purg'd of thoſe Things, which yourſelves *know* to be *no Parts* of the *Religion of* CHRIST! We wiſh to ſee it *eſtabliſh'd* upon the catholick and *broad Bottom*, upon which *alone* it can ſtand *firm*; even the *ſcriptural* Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf being its *only* Lawgiver and King; And not upon the narrow Baſis on which it now reſts, the *Articles* and *Canons*, the *Inſtitutions* and *Inventions* of fallible and weak Men; on which it can never be ſtrongly and firmly fixt; which are all, in the Apoſtle's Language, *Wood*, *Hay*, *Stubble*; *whoſe End is to be burnt!* We wiſh, Sir, that as it opens its Boſom, and admits the vileſt Debauchees without demurring

demurring at their open Violation of GOD's *Commands*; so it would charitably extend its Arms to take us into its Communion, without insisting upon our Obedience to the Injunctions and *Commands of* MEN! Finally: we wish, that what GOD, in his Wisdom, hath been pleased to leave *indifferent*; your Church also, in her Wisdom, would be pleased to leave *the same:* That you would not attempt to *mend* the Institutions of JESUS CHRIST: But would receive us into your Church upon the same Terms and Qualifications as CHRIST and *his Apostles* would have received us into theirs; and as GOD will receive us into Heaven at last!—This, Sir, I assure you, is all the *Harm* we wish the Church: Judge then yourself, whether we bear it any *Enmity*; and whether you are not now bound to take from us the *Incapacities*, which you engaged, *simple as you sat there*, should on this Condition be removed.

And you will give me Leave, Sir, to think, and to hope, that there are Numbers of your worthy *Clergy* of the same Mind; that it would not at all lessen either the Glory, Stability, or Prosperity of your Church, if its Bounds were *thus enlarg'd*, to admit the *moderate Dissenters*, who sincerely desire so happy a *Coalition*. Its Enemies seem to multiply, and dark Clouds to rise around it. *Popery* is making dangerous and mighty Inroads on the one hand; and *Deism* on the other. There may come a Time, as there formerly has been, when the Frame of your Church being terribly threatened, we may again be consider'd as no despicable *Auxiliaries*. But—If we cannot be so happy, as not to be *cast out* and *rejected* by our Brethren; our Consolation is this, that GOD *judgeth in the Earth*; and that he will surely, at the *proper Season*, vindicate and plead the Cause of the Injured and Oppress'd.

But to return to the Point of *Discipline*. To the acknowledg'd Irregularity of Lay-Chancellors in your Church, you would fain "put in Balance the "Lay-

" Lay-Preaching, Lay-Praying, and Lay Ordina-
" tion allow'd in our Churches*." To which I reply, that in the Generality of our Churches there is no ſuch Thing either allow'd, or ever done. Beſides, if there were: Did not your *own Church* ſet us the Pattern? In *the Rubrick* before the general Confeſſion at the Communion, did it not direct?—*Then ſhall this general Confeſſion be made, in the Name of all thoſe that are to receive, either by* ONE OF THEM, *or elſe by* ONE OF THE MINISTERS. How it came to be *omitted* in the late Editions of the Common Prayer; whether it is done according to Law, and by Authority of Parliament; you, Sir, perhaps can ſay.

As to " Laymen being an eſſential Part of all
" our Conſiſtories and Synods; ſitting in them,
" and having an equal Vote with Paſtors in all Bu-
" ſineſs—jointly with them *ſuſpending* from the
" Lord's Table, *&c.* †." This, Sir, is no other than the *ſcriptural* apoſtolic Plan. The aggriev'd Perſon is by our Lord, you know, *Mat.* xviii. 17. directed to *lay his Complaint before* THE CHURCH, *i. e.* the Congregation of the Faithful: and if the Offender *neglected to hear* THE CHURCH (the Congregation) admoniſhing and reproving him, he was then to be conſider'd *as an heathen Man and a Publican.* So the corrupt Member, at *Corinth*, was to be ſolemnly excommunicated. How? Not by any particular Perſon, *Chancellor* or *Biſhop*; but it was to be the Act of the *whole Church.* To the whole *Body* or *Congregation* of Believers in that City, St. *Paul* gives Directions, That when *they were come together, they ſhould deliver ſuch an one to* Satan.—— And, that *they ſhould put away from amongſt themſelves that wicked Perſon*, 1 *Cor.* v. 4, 5, 13. which *Excommunication* he afterwards calls a *Puniſhment inflicted by the* MANY, 2 *Cor.* ii 6. So in that weighty and momentous *Queſtion*——How far the

* Let. III. p. 38. † Ibid. p. 37.

Gentiles were to ſubmit to the Law of *Moſes?* The *Elders* and *Brethren* are join'd with the *Apoſtles* in the Deciſion and Decree, *Acts* xv. 23. The *Laity* therefore have *a Right* to be conſulted, and to judge, in theſe important *Church Matters*, together with the Clergy; as they do, by their Repreſentatives, in what you call our *Conſiſtories*. But with you, Sir, a *ſingle Layman*, (this is the Abſurdity which you ſeem willing to loſe ſight of) I repeat it, a *ſingle Layman*, not only in Diſtinction from, but in actual Oppoſition to, *the Biſhop*, and all the Church, both *Clergy* and *Laity*, has Authority to judge and determine theſe important Matters; and excommunicates, or abſolves; ſhuts out, or lets in, according to his *ſole* Pleaſure.

And here, Sir, let me ſtop a Moment, and review the Point in Debate betwixt our good Dr. *Watts* and yourſelf. As for *the Lives* of the Diſſenters, tho' God *knows* we have nothing whereof *to boaſt*, but a great Deal that calls for *Shame* and *Humiliation* on this Head; yet whether we are quite *ſo deep* immers'd in the Deluge of *Profaneneſs*, *Immorality*, and *Vice*, which ſpreads over the Land.—— Whether the *Blaſphemies* and *Oaths*, the *Debauchery*, *Riot*, and *guilty Exceſſes*, which too generally prevail, be in Proportion to our Number, found *as rife* amongſt us, as amongſt the Members of the *eſtabliſh'd Church*———muſt be left, and we freely leave it, to the *impartial World* to judge betwixt us.

And as to *ſpecial* Obligations *and* Advantages *for holy Living*, which you conteſt ſtrenuouſly with the *Doctor* to lie on your Side; what hath been above obſerved on your ſeveral Offices for *Confirmation*, *Abſolution* of the Sick, and *Burial* of the Dead, ſhews them, I humbly think, to have really an ill Aſpect upon the Morals of your People; a dangerous and apparent Tendency to cheriſh in them *falſe Hopes*, and to give them *wrong Notions* of the Terms of Acceptance, and of Entrance

trance into Heaven. And of the deplorable State in which your *Diſcipline* lies (which you acknowledge to be of *great Moment* to the Edification of the Church) no Enemy need to wiſh *a ſadder* Account than *yourſelf* have given of it. Upon the whole therefore, Sir, I cannot think, the worthy *Doctor* to deſerve *Cenſure*, for attempting to rouze *Diſſenters* from the languiſhing State of Religion amongſt them, by putting them in mind of the *ſuperior Advantages* they enjoy'd, and of the *peculiar Obligations* under which they manifeſtly lay to greater *Holineſs of Life*.

You ſeem not a little diſpleaſed * at its having been urged as a Reaſon for *our Diſſent*, "That "your Church has ſhewn a perſecuting Spirit," and with ſome Emotion aſk — "Did the Church "perſecute at any Time its own Members? Were "you or your Fathers ever perſecuted while they "continued in the Church? And were they driven "out of it by thoſe Perſecutions?" I confeſs, Sir, you quite ſurprize me by ſuch Queſtions as theſe. What! are you only a Stranger in *Britain*; and have never heard of the bitter Sufferings of our worthy Fathers *the* PURITANS? With what Silencings, Deprivations, Fines, Impriſonments, and lingering and cruel Deaths, for more than an *Hundred Years*, they were terribly harraſs'd and oppreſs'd by *your Church?* Have you never read, with a *bleeding Heart*, the unrelenting Rigors of your Archbiſhops *Parker*, *Bancroft*, *Whitegift*, *Laud*, —under the *firſt* of whom above *an hundred*; under the *ſecond*, above *three hundred* pious and learned Men, not only *Members* but *Miniſters* of your Church, were ſilenc'd, ſuſpended, admoniſh'd, deprived, many of them loaded with grievous and heavy Fines, and ſhut up in filthy Jails, where they expired ſlowly thro' Penury and Want? And what were *the Crimes* which drew this dreadful Storm of

* Let. III. p. 60, 61.

epiſcopal Vengeance on them? Nothing but their Scruples about the *Surplice* and the *Cap*, about Bowing at the *Name of Jeſus*, about *Chriſt*'s Deſcent into Hell, and ſuch like momentous Points.

Have you never read, Sir, what Deſolations *Laud* brought upon *our Fathers*, whilſt yet in your Church? How *many Hundreds* of them were ſequeſtred, driven from their Livings, excommunicated, perſecuted in the High Commiſſion Court, and forced to leave the Kingdom for not *punctually conforming* to all the Ceremonies and Rites; and not daring to tell their People, that they might *lawfully* profane *the Sabbath* by Gambols and Sports; and to publiſh from their Pulpits the *Permiſſion* of the *King* to *break the Command of* GOD—And yet you aſk—"*Were your Fathers ever* "*perſecuted while they continued in the Church?*"

Pray! what was it peopled the ſavage Deſarts of *North America?* Was it not the *Thouſands* of perſecuted and oppreſs'd Families, who fled from *tyranniſing* BISHOPS? Who not being ſuffer'd to worſhip quietly in their *native* Country, as their Conſciences directed, ſought a peaceful Retreat from the Rage of their *Fellow Chriſtians* amongſt more *hoſpitable Indians*.—To omit a thouſand Acts of Cruelty, which thro' ſeveral ſucceſſive Reigns *our Fathers* ſuffer'd not only *from*, but when actually *in*, *the Church*.—Did ſhe not at laſt, in a moſt arbitrary and unrighteous Manner *caſt out* at once above *two thouſand* of them, excellent and pious Miniſters, and abandon them, and their ſtarving Families, to great Poverty and Diſtreſs? To *heighten* that Diſtreſs, did not your Church, by *another* ACT, baniſh them *five Miles* from any *City*, *Borough*, or *Church* in which they had before ſerved: and thereby put them at a *proper Diſtance* from their Acquaintance and Friends, who might miniſter to their Relief? Did ſhe not by *another* ACT forbid their meeting to *worſhip* GOD, any where but in your *own Churches*, under

under the Penalties of heavy Fines, Impriſonments, and Baniſhment to foreign Lands?

In Conſequence of theſe *cruel* ACTS, were not vaſt Numbers of *pious Clergymen*, our Forefathers (once the *Glory* of your Church) with Multitudes of their People, laid in Priſons amongſt Thieves and common Malefactors, where they ſuffered the greateſt Hardſhips, Indignities, Oppreſſions; their Houſes were rudely rifled, their Goods made a Prey to hungry Informers, and their Families given up to Beggary and Want. "An Eſtimate was "publiſhed of near *eight Thouſand* Proteſtant *Diſ-* "*ſenters*, who had periſhed in Priſon in the Reign "only of *Charles* II. By ſevere Penalties inflicted "on them, for aſſembling to worſhip GOD, they "ſuffered in their Trade and Eſtates in the Com- "paſs of a few Years, at leaſt two Millions; and "a Liſt of *ſixty Thouſand* Perſons was taken, who "had ſuffered on a religious Account, betwixt the "*Reſtoration* and the *Revolution* *."—Behold, the Groans and the Blood of Miriads of oppreſſed *Puritans*, which cry beneath the Altar, *How long, O* LORD! But you are *deaf* to all their Groans—And with Inſenſibility enough aſk—*Were your Fathers ever perſecuted?*—

"But the Preſbyterian and Independant Churches "have each in their Day of Power, diſcovered as "much, and indeed *more* of that Spirit †." Too much of that *bad Spirit* 'tis acknowledged, they have *each* ſhewn. But ſurely there is *no Compariſon* betwixt the Cruelties and Oppreſſions of your Church, and of their's. Your *little Finger, has been thicker than their Loins.*

"But whatever the Church may have been here- "tofore, you affirm, it is not *now* of a perſecuting "Spirit: And that there is not the leaſt Appear- "ance of its having diſquieted and oppreſſed any "on

* Vid. *Neal's* Hiſt. Purit. Vol. IV. p. 554. † Lett. III. p. 61.

" on Account of Religion, for more now than half " a Century *." You had forgot, Sir, the famous *Schiſm*, and *occaſional Conformity* ACTS, which long ſince that Date *much diſquieted* and *oppreſſed* us. The *Teſt* and the *Corporation* ACTS had alſo ſlipped your Memory, which at *this Time* deprive us of valuable and important Privileges, to which as faithful Subjects, and Members of the *Commonwealth*, we think we have a natural undoubted Right.

The preſent Governors of your Church indeed, (Thanks be to Heaven for it) are too wiſe and too righteous, to permit *Perſecution* to rage againſt us. But to *their* Clemency and Juſtice, Sir, not to the kind and benevolent *Spirit* and *Conſtitution* of your Church, I humbly apprehend we owe it, that we are not *at this Time* ſeverely perſecuted and oppreſſed. If the ACT *of Uniformity*, which to be ſure you will call a *grand Pillar* of your Church, is not a very unrighteous and perſecuting *Act*, yet ſeveral of your *Canons* breathe, you know, Sir, a very curſing and perſecuting *Spirit*. By the *former*, " Whoever ſhall declare or ſpeak any Thing " in the Derogation or Depraving of the Book of " *Common Prayer*, or any Thing therein contained, " or any Part thereof, he ſhall for the *firſt* Offence " ſuffer *Impriſonment* for *one whole Year*, without " Bail or Mainprize; and for the ſecond Offence, " be *impriſoned* DURING LIFE." Here I affirm nothing, but appeal to the whole World; I appeal, Sir, to your own Conſcience, whether this be or be not an *unjuſt and a perſecuting* ACT? By the latter, the *Canons*, " If any Man ſhall affirm " any of the Things contained in the Book of *Ar*" *ticles*, *Common Prayer*, or of *Ordination*;" (in which yet there are *many Things* acknowledged by your own moſt learned Divines, and I doubt not, by yourſelf to need Alteration; your IV, V, VI, VII, and VIIIth *Canons*, thunder out upon him a terrible

* Let. III. p. 61.

terrible *Excommunication ipſo facto* *, by which he is to be cut off as a cankered and rotten Member, and not to be reſtored, till he hath repented and publickly revoked his *wicked Errors*. Doth not this ſavour, Sir, of an antichriſtian and perſecuting Spirit?

But you ſeem not, with Submiſſion, to have *yourſelf*, a juſt Horror of the dreadful Sin of *Perſecution*, and to be a little too deeply tinged with this *fanatical* Spirit: For you call aloud for "the "*Church's Sword* to fall upon *Hereticks*, as well as "upon *immoral Perſons:* And put me in Mind, "that by that ancient Diſcipline" (which you *wiſh* to ſee reſtored) "*open Schiſmaticks* were treated al- "moſt as *roughly* as any Sort of Offenders what- "ſoever †." By *Hereticks*, no doubt you mean, thoſe whom you take to be ſuch: And by *open Schiſmaticks*, thoſe who are withdrawn from *your* Church: *Theſe* you wiſh to ſee *roughly handled*, and to have the *Church's Sword drawn upon them.* But, God *Almighty* be praiſed! We live under ſo juſt a Government, as is not, we hope, like to gratify this *cruel Wiſh.*

Do you not remember, Sir, that the *firſt Reformers* were counted *Hereticks* and *open Schiſmaticks*, by

* Concerning an *Excommunication ipſo facto*, our late learned *Primate*, Dr. *Wake*, has obſerved. "*Firſt*, That there is no "Need in this Caſe, of any *Admonition*, as where the Judge is "to *give Sentence*; but every one is to take *Notice* of the *Law*, "at his Peril, and to ſee that he be not overtaken by it. And, "*Secondly*, That there is no Need of any *Sentence* to be pro- "nounced, which the *Canon* itſelf has *paſſed*; and which is by "that Means *already promulged* upon every one, as ſoon as he "comes within the *Obligation* of it. In other Caſes, a Man "may do Things worthy of Cenſure, and yet behave himſelf ſo "warily in them as to eſcape the Puniſhment of the Church, "for want of *legal Evidence* to *convict* him. But *Excommuni-* "*catio* Canonis *ligat etiam occulta Delicta*. Where the *Canon* "gives Sentence, there is *no eſcaping*; but the *Conſcience* of "every Man becomes *obliged* by it, as ſoon as ever he is ſenſible, "that he has done that which was forbidden, under the Pain of "*ſuch* an *Excommunication*." *Appeal in Behalf of the King's Supremacy*, p. 22.

† Let. III. p. 12, 21.

by the Top Churchmen amongſt whom they lived? That JESUS CHRIST and his *Apoſtles* were counted the very ſame? That our *dear Brethren* in *France*, who are now *bleeding* under the Church's Sword, are moſt confidently reckoned *ſuch*, by all the *Rulers* and *Prieſts* there? But is it fit that theſe *Hereticks* ſhould be thus *roughly handled?* Or, is it *thoſe only*, whom YOU are pleaſed to call by *that Name*, who merit theſe *rough* Meaſures? Whenever, Sir, you ſhall produce your Patent from Heaven, conſtituting you JUDGE *of* HERESY, and ſhall be able *authoritatively* and *infallibly* to pronounce *what is*, and *what is not*, to be puniſhed as SUCH, *then* the Church's *Sword* will, I hope, be put into your Hands. But till *then*, Sir, 'tis much *ſafer* to let it remain *ſheathed*; leſt under the Notion of *Hereticks*, you fall upon and roughly handle, Men better than yourſelf. This has ever been the Caſe, ſince the Days of the Apoſtles, when *Eccleſiaſticks* have preſumed authoritatively to draw and uſe the *Church's Sword.*

But you add, " 'Tis well we can't ſay your " Church has ſhewn a *dividing* Spirit, and *actually* " *divided itſelf* by an open Schiſm, from a ſound " Part of the Catholic Church; *that*, indeed, " would have been an *unanſwerable Reaſon* for your " diſſent*." Yes, *this* alſo, Sir, we can ſay, and therefore ſtand *juſtified* by your own Conceſſion. That miſguided unhappy Prince *Charles* I. and his furious Primate *Laud*, began this *fatal Schiſm*, in Complaiſance to the Church of *Rome*, and actually divided the *Church of England* from a ſound Part of the Catholic Church; and the ſame *ſchiſmatical Spirit* has ever ſince too generally prevailed in it.

The *Dutch*, *Walloon*, and *French* Churches here in *England*, were eſtabliſhed by Charters from ſeveral of our Princes; but Lord *Clarendon* informs us, " The *Biſhops* growing jealous that the countenan-

" cing

* Let. III. p. 60.

" cing *another* Diſcipline of the Church here by " order of State, would at leaſt *diminiſh* the Re- " putation and Dignity of the *epiſcopal* Govern- " ment," got them ſuppreſſed. " And that this " might be ſure to look like *more* than what was " *neceſſary* to the CIVIL *Policy* of the Kingdom, " whereas in all former Times, the Ambaſſadors " and all foreign Miniſters of State employed from " *England*, into any Parts where the *reformed Re-* " *ligion* was exerciſed, frequented their Church s, " and gave all *poſſible Countenance* to their Pro- " feſſion; the *contrary* to this was now with *great* " *Induſtry* practiſed, and ſome Advertiſements, if " not Inſtructions, given to the Ambaſſadors there " (*Le Clerc* ſays they were *ordered*) to *forbear* any " extraordinary Commerce with Men of that Pro- " feſſion. And Lord *Scudamore*, the laſt ordinary " Ambaſſador there, not only declined going to " *Charenton* (the *Proteſtant* Church) but furniſhed " his own Chapel with Wax-candles on the Com- " munion-table, *&c.* And beſides, was careful " to publiſh upon all Occaſions by himſelf, and " thoſe who had the neareſt Relation to him, that " the *Church of* ENGLAND *looked not upon the Hugo-* " *nots* of FRANCE, *as a Part of* THEIR COMMU- " NION; which was likewiſe too much, and too " induſtriouſly diſcourſed at Home*." Behold here, Sir, the Church of *England*, *actually dividing* itſelf from a *ſound Part* of the Catholic Church! For *ſuch* ſurely you will *own* the brave *Proteſtants in France*, who have born *Teſtimony* to the Faith by ſo great and ſo glorious a *Fight of Afflictions*, and ſealed it with *Seas of Blood.*

I would alſo put you in Mind of another Fact, that ſeems to have eſcaped your Reading, or Memory. Upon the Queen of *Bohemia*'s earneſt Solicitation with the King her Brother (*Charles* I. *Anno* 1634) a Collection was ordered throughout *England*,

* *Clarend.* Hiſt. Rebel. Vol. III. p. 96, 97.

for the poor perſecuted Miniſters of the Palatinate, who were baniſhed their Country for their Religion. In the Brief which was granted for this Purpoſe, was this Clauſe: *Whoſe Caſes are the more to be deplored, becauſe this Extremity is fallen upon them, for their Sincerity and Conſtancy in the true Religion, which we together with them profeſs.* Archbiſhop *Laud* excepted againſt this Clauſe, and denied that the Religion of the Palatine Churches was the ſame with ours, becauſe they were Calviniſts, and their Miniſters had not Epiſcopal Ordination. *Laud* acquainted the King with his Objections. The Clauſe was ordered to be expunged, and the brave unhappy *Palatines* were thus publickly diſowned by the Governors of the Church, who in all reaſonable Conſtruction, muſt be ſuppoſed to know and ſpeak its Senſe, and not allowed to be Profeſſors of the ſame true Religion *. How unchriſtian and ſchiſmatical this!

Of the like *Schiſm* was it alſo guilty, in the *Occaſional Conformity* Act, which took Place in a late Reign. For it thereby FORBID under *ſevere Penalties*, all its Members who had any Places of Profit or Truſt, to worſhip or hold Communion with any of the foreign Churches, *Dutch*, *French*, *&c.* in thoſe Kingdoms, in which its *Liturgy* was not uſed. And ſhould any Miniſter of any of the *reformed Churches* of *Scotland*, *France*, *Germany*, *Holland*, now come into *England*, would *your Church* receive them *as Miniſters*, or admit them *as ſuch*, to *officiate* in its public Worſhip? I preſume you know, Sir, ſhe would not. But is not this *virtually* renouncing their Communion? Nor will you admit even the *Lay Members* of any of theſe *foreign* Churches, to your Communion at the *Lord's-ſupper*, except beſides what CHRIST has *ordered*, they will ſubmit alſo to ſome *Order* and *Inſtitution* of YOUR OWN.

Now

* *Neal's* Hiſt. Purit. Vol. II. p. 271.

Now your great *Stillingfleet* * hath thus determined—" That which *confines*, muſt alſo *divide* the " Church; for by that *Confinement*, a *Separation* " is made betwixt the Parties confined, and the " other; which Separation muſt *be made*, by the " Party *ſo limiting* Chriſtian Communion." Upon the whole then, 'tis moſt evident, that *your Church* has ſhewn, and does ſhew, a *ſchiſmatical* and *dividing* Spirit, has actually *divided itſelf* from ſound Parts of the univerſal Church. *This* therefore you will pleaſe to take, as *an unanſwerable Reaſon* for our *diſſent*.

You muſt excuſe me, Sir, if I think you treat a great deal *too ſeverely* a worthy Body of Men, *our* MINISTERS; when you repreſent them as " Perſons whom the Faithful, far from being per- " mitted to enter into any *Paſtoral Relation* to them, " are not permitted to have any *Chriſtian Commu-* " *nion* with them; no, not ſo much as any *inti-* " *mate unneceſſary* Acquaintance and Familiarity " with them in *common Life* †."—And tell me— " They are not duly ordained to their Office; that " their Adminiſtrations are moſt certainly irregular, " an unneceſſary and wanton, if not a factious " Departure from the primitive Order. And that " therefore I cannot depend, at leaſt with ſo much " Aſſurance, as is requiſite to the Peace and Ac- " quieſcence of my Mind, that ſuch Ordinances " will be bleſſed to me ‡."—I have weighed this Matter with a good deal of Attention, and upon the whole am fully ſatisfied, both from *Scripture* and *Antiquity*, that *Preſbyters* have a Right to, and did from the Apoſtles Times actually *ordain*. There are *two* Things, amongſt many others, which I beg Leave to offer to your Conſideration upon this Point.—

* Ration. Account, p. 359. † Let. II. p. 8. ‡ Let. I. p. 73.

1. That the Ministers of the *Reformed Churches* in all foreign Parts, have almost all of them, I apprehend no other than *Presbyterian Ordination.*

The whole Company of illustrious Protestant Churches of *Scotland*, *France*, *Holland*, *Switzerland*, *Germany*, *Poland*, *Hungary*, *Denmark*, except perhaps *Sweden*, *&c.* have none but *Presbyterian* Ordination amongst them. For *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Bercer*, *Melancton*, *Bugenhagius*, *&c.* and all the first *Reformers* and *Founders* of these Churches, who *ordained* Ministers amongst them, were themselves *Presbyters* and *no other.* And though in some of these Churches, there are *Ministers* which are called *Superintendants*, or *Bishops*, yet these are only *primi inter Pares* *, *the first among Equals*; not pretending to any *Superiority of* ORDER. Having *themselves* no other Orders, than what either *Presbyters* gave them, or was given them as Presbyters, they can convey *no other* to those they ordain †. You are a Gentleman of too great Discernment to urge the stale Pretence, that this is to these Churches a Matter not of *Choice* but of *Necessity* and *Force.* For if they thought *episcopal Ordination*, I do not say *necessary*, but even more *regular* or *expedient*, could they not with the *greatest Ease* immediately obtain it? Would not the Church of *England*, upon *the least* Intimation of their Willingness to receive it, most readily send them *Bishops* to supply this Defect? You know, Sir, too well its charitable Disposition, and even *Offers* of this kind, in the least to suspect it. Whatever *Censures* you pass then upon the *Orders* and *Administrations* of the Ministers amongst us, they equally fall upon all the *Reformed Churches*

* Account of *Denmark*, p. 253. † The *Danish* Church is indeed at this Time governed by *Bishops.* But they look upon *Episcopacy* as only an human Institution; and the first Protestant Prelates in that Kingdom, were ordained by *Bugenhagius*, a meer Presbyter; who by Consequence, could convey no other than a *Presbyterian* Ordination to their successors ever since. *Seekendorf. Hist. Lutherian.* Lib. 20. Sect. 1. *With Caveat*, p. 15.

Churches throughout the whole *Proteſtant World*. If *ours* are an unneceſſary and wanton Departure from the primitive Order, *theirs* are the ſame. Now it gives me great Pleaſure to ſee myſelf in ſuch a Crowd of excellent and good Company. And unleſs you can offer ſomething more *demonſtrative* on this Head, than I have ever yet ſeen, my Mind will enjoy *full Peace* as to the Regularity of the Miniſtration on which I attend. But,

2 It ſeems a little ſtrange to hear you glorying over *us*, and conſequently over all the *foreign Churches*, as to this Matter of ORDERS, when theſe *very* ORDERS in which you glory, you acknowledge to have derived ONLY from the *Church of* ROME. *A Church* which yourſelves, in your Homilies, confeſs to be *idolatrous* and *antichriſtian*, "Not only an *Harlot*, as the Scripture calleth her, "but alſo a foul, filthy, old, wither'd *Harlot*; the "*fouleſt* and *filthieſt* that ever was ſeen.—And that "as it at preſent is, and hath been for 900 Years, "it is ſo far from the Nature of the TRUE *Church*, "that nothing can be more *."—*Note*, Theſe *Homilies* every Clergyman publickly declares, and ſubſcribes with his Hand, that they contain *a godly and wholeſome Doctrine*, fit to be read in Churches by Miniſters.

Now it is ONLY, Sir, from this *filthy*, *wither'd*, *old* HARLOT, that you derive, by Ordination, your *ſpiritual Deſcent*. You confeſs yourſelves *born of her*, as to *eccleſiaſtical Pedigree:* And *the Sons* of this fouleſt and filthieſt of Harlots, you acknowledge as *Brethren*, by admitting *their Orders* as regular and valid; whereas *thoſe* of the *Proteſtant Churches* you reject. If a *Prieſt*, ordained with all the ſuperſtitious and idolatrous Rites of this *antichriſtian* and *falſe* Church, comes over to the Church of *England*; you admit him as a BROTHER, *duly ordained*; without obliging him to paſs under *that Ceremony*

* Vid. Homilies, p. 162, 295.

Ceremony again: But if a Minister of the *Reform'd Churches* joins himself to you, you consider *him* as but a *Layman*, an *unordain'd Person*, and oblige him to receive *Orders* according to your Form. How, Sir, is it possible to account for this Procedure! Can *that Church*, which is *no true* Church, impart *valid* and *true* Orders? Can a *filthy old Harlot* produce any other than a *spurious* and *corrupt* Breed? Will you rest the *Validity* and *Regularity* of your Administrations on your receiving the *sacerdotal Character* from the Bishops and Popes of the *Romish Church?* Many, if not most, of whom, were Men of most corrupt and infamous Lives; *Men*, who were so far from being *regular* and *valid* MINISTERS in the Church of JESUS CHRIST, that they were not so much as *regular* or *real* MEMBERS of it at all; and therefore could not possibly, *duly*, or *regularly* OFFICIATE therein; consequently, had *no Power* to communicate or convey *Orders* or *Offices* in the CHRISTIAN Church. Whatever *Offices* they convey'd therefore, are at best doubtful and suspicious; if not absolutely null, irregular, and void ——So that really your own *Orders*, if strictly examin'd may minister great Doubt and Disquietude of Mind.

If *Charity* then were silent; *Prudence*, methinks, should loudly dictate, that you *speak gently* as to the Authority and Orders of *our Ministers*, when you know it is in their Power so strongly to *retort*. It was therefore surely not *wise*, Sir, as well as extremely *unkind*, to set them up as Objects of public *Odium* and *Avoidance*; and to admonish "*every* "*good Man not to have any intimate or unnecessary* "*Acquaintance with them, or Familiarity in common* "*Life.*" But——BLESSED, our *Lord* hath said, *are ye, when Men shall hate you, and* SEPARATE YOU *from their* COMPANY, *and* CAST OUT *your Names as* EVIL, *for the Son of Man's sake:* REJOICE

ye

ye in that Day, and leap for joy; for behold, your Reward in Heaven is great * !

You very ſtrenuouſly conteſt what you call "one "of the favourite and fundamental Principles of "the Diſſention, namely, *That every Lay-Chriſtian* "*has a Right to chuſe his own Paſtor* †." A Right ſo evidently founded on *Reaſon*, *Scripture*, and the undoubted *Practice* of the primitive Church, and ſo generally acknowledg'd by *all the learned* of your own Communion, that I cannot but a little wonder at the Alertneſs with which you make your Attack upon it. The *Charge* given to the Chriſtian *People* —*To take heed what they hear*—*to beware of falſe Prophets*—*not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits*—inconteſtibly proves them to have a *Right of Judgment* and of *Choice*, relating to this Matter: And that *this Right*, which GOD has given them, it is *their Duty* to uſe.

When an *Apoſtle* was to be choſen in the Room of *Judas* the Traitor, the *whole Body* of the Diſciples were applied to on that Occaſion, *Acts* i. who APPOINTED *by common Suffrage*, TWO from their whole Number to be *Candidates* for that Office, § 23 "*The Election*, you ſay, *was evidently made* "*by* GOD ‡." But was it not *as evidently* made by *the People* alſo? If the choice of ONE from *the* TWO be acknowledg'd to be the Act of GOD; was not the Choice of *theſe* TWO, from amongſt the *whole Number*, as much the Act of the People? The People then were *actually* concern'd in that Choice. "The *ſeven Deacons*, Acts vi. you ſay, "*were but preſented or recommended by the Brethren* §:" But let the ſacred Story judge—*Wherefore, Brethren*, LOOK YE OUT *amongſt you, ſeven Men of honeſt Report: And the Saying pleaſed the whole Multitude, and they* CHOSE *Stephen and Philip*, &c.——Can Words be more expreſs?

That

* Luke vi. 22, 23. † Let. II. p. 6. ‡ Ibid. p. 8.
§ Ibid.

That *Bishops* and *Pastors* were chosen in the *ancient Church* by the Suffrage of *the People*, the Evidence is so strong, as greatly to try the Countenance of the Person who disputes it. *Ignatius*, if you will allow him genuine, says πρεπον εστιν υμιν ως εκκλησιαι Θεου χειροτονησαι επισκοπον *. *It becomes you as the Church of* GOD *to* CHUSE *a Bishop*. *Alexander* was *made* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, by the *Compulsion or* CHOICE *of the Members of that Church*. Upon the Death of *Anterus*, Bishop of *Rome*, *All the People met together in the Church to* CHUSE *a Successor—and they all took* Fabianus *and placed him in the episcopal Chair*. So *Cornelius*, his Successor, was ELECTED *by the Suffrage of the Clergy and Laity*. *Cyprian* often acknowledges he was made Bishop of *Carthage*, *Favore Plebis—Populi universi Suffragio*, &c. *By the* FAVOUR *and* VOTE *of all the People* †. And expressly says, *Plebs maximè habet Potestatem, vel eligendi dignos Sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi. The chief Power of* CHUSING *worthy Ministers, and of* REJECTING *the unworthy, belongs to* THE PEOPLE. I produce no further Evidence upon a Point so incontestible, but the Words of a *learned Brother* of your own, high enough for Church Power, "*That* "*the People had Voices in the Choice of Bishops all* "*must grant*; *and it can be only* IGNORANCE *and* "FOLLY *that pleads the contrary* ‡."

"You think a Man provides very well for his "Soul, who submits himself to the Instructions, "and devoutly attends all the Administrations of "an able and orthodox Minister, by *whomsoever* pro- "vided. And it will be confessed, you suppose, "that the *King*, and *Bishops*, *Lord-Chancellor*, *No-* "*bility*, and *Gentry*, who are our greater Patrons, "are *more competent Judges* of the Abilities and "Orthodoxy of Clergymen, and of their Fitness "for particular Stations, than the *common Run* of "Men,

* Epist ad Philad. † Vid. Constitut and Discipline of the Primitive Church, p 46. ‡ *Lowth* on Church Power.

'Men, especially *the Vulgar* *.'' But imagine yourself, Sir, for a Moment on the other Side the Water, preaching this wholesome Doctrine to the good *Protestants* in *France*. If *Kings*, *Bishops*, *&c.* have Authority and Right to *appoint Pastors* to the People, then the People *are Bound* to receive and attend *the Pastors* they send. But if this be *right* in one Country (I must again put you in Mind) 'tis *right* also in another; unless *one Kingdom* can produce a Warrant, or Charter from Heaven giving it *such Authority*, which *other Kingdoms* have not. If this Doctrine be Truth in *England*, 'tis Truth also in *France*. The brave *Protestants* then have *rashly* and *unwarrantably* withdrawn themselves from the Pastors, whom their *King* and *Bishops* had set over them; they ought to return, and submit to their *established* Guides, and not *proudly* attempt to find Ministers more able and orthodox, than those *their Superiors* have solemnly deputed to that Trust. —Will you stand, Sir, to this Doctrine? If not, you must allow every Man a Right to judge for himself.

To the common and just Plea—"That every "Man has as good Right to chuse his own *Pastor*, "to whom to commit the Care of his Soul, as to "chuse his *Lawyer* or *Physician*, with whom he "intrusts his Body or Estate," you reply: "Physicians in many Places are provided by Go- "vernors for those who are sick, as in *Chelsea*, and "other Hospitals, whilst no body dreams of any "Incroachment upon their natural Rights †." But tell me, Sir, would you not complain, if whenever you were sick, you were OBLIGED *to accept* of this *public Provision*; and MUST *commit yourself* to the Care of those Gentlemen of the Faculty who officiated in the Hospital, supposing you lived near it, whatever Notion you had of their Fidelity or Skill? Or should a *Physician* be provided, and esta-

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* *Lowth* on Church Power, p. 9. † Ibid. p. 13.

bliſhed *by Law* in each Pariſh of this Kingdom, would you not call it an *Infringement* of your natural Right, to be *obliged* to call him in (however *ignorant* or *uncapable* you took him to be) and to commit your Health to his Care; eſpecially if there was at Hand *another*, licenſed by Authority, whom you thought to have better Judgment, and from whoſe Preſcripts you had received frequent and ſignal Relief? I am perſuaded in this Caſe, you would ſtrongly and very juſtly *complain* of the Reſtraint. But every Man ſurely, is as capable, and has as undoubted a Right *to Judge* and *to chuſe* what Miniſter to attend for the Edification of his Soul, as what Phyſician to uſe for the Recovery of his Health.

" No, you reply, there is a Difference in the " *two* Caſes; your *Paſtors* are your *Guides* and " *Governors*, to whom you owe *Subjection* in ſpiri- " tual Things: And it is not, I think, quite ſo " reaſonable to challenge to yourſelves the chuſing " of theſe, as of the other who have *no Authority* " over you*." But I beſeech you, good Sir, who MADE *them my* GOVERNORS? Who GAVE *them* this *Rule* and *Authority* over me? Does every *gay* STRIPLING, juſt emancipated from the *College*, that can get (and there are *various Ways* of getting, you know Sir, not fit to be here mentioned) to be inducted into a good Living, does he, I aſk, thenceforward become GOVERNOR *of all the Souls* dwelling in his Pariſh, to whom they *owe* SUBJECTION *in ſpiritual Things?* What, muſt all the learned, the wiſe, the grave and experienced Perſons reſiding in that Pariſh, conſider the *enrobed* YOUTH as their *ſpiritual* RULER, veſted with AUTHORITY *over them*, in Things pertaining to GOD, to Conſcience, and to Eternity! Yes, *he has* AUTHORITY, you ſay, *over me*, I OWE him *ſpiritual Subjection*. But how far, Sir, does the Authority of my *young* RULER

* *Lowth* on Church Power, p. 14.

RULER extend? Must I *believe* whatever he tells me, because *He* hath said it; or, *do* whatever he commands me, because *He* hath injoined it; or, follow my *spiritual Guide* wherever *He* shall lead me, without considering, examining, and judging for myself, whither the Course tends? And if I happen to think he is leading me *wrong*, must I still *obey* and *submit* to my *ghostly* DIRECTOR, and trust GOD with the Event? Am I to deliver myself up ENTIRELY, or only *a little*, and *in Part*, to his sacerdotal *Authority?* And must I see Things in Religion, *only* and *always* by the Eyes of my *Overseer*, or ought I not also *sometimes*, at least, to see with *my own?* Will you please to inform me also, whether as my *young* GOVERNOR undertakes *to judge for me* now, he will also undertake *to be judged for me* hereafter; and *to be damned for me* too, if I happen to go astray, by going as *he* directs?—— A certain *Nobleman*, not half a Century ago, got his *Huntsman* inducted into a good Living; and from the *Care of his Hounds*, advanced him to the Priesthood and to the *Cure of Souls*. Now from the Time of his Investiture with this new Character and Office, he became the GOVERNOR *and* GUIDE, *it seems*, *of all the Souls* in his Parish, and they OWED *him Subjection in spiritual Things*. If a *Lock* then, a *Newton*, or even his *Lordship* himself who gave him the Living, had dwelt within its Bounds, they *ought* reverently to regard HIM as their *spiritual* GOVERNOR *and* DIRECTOR; and to *submit themselves to him*, as having THE RULE *over them*, and *watching for their Souls*. ——But are these *Claims* to be vouched, or is this *Doctrine* to be preached, in this Age of Liberty and Light? Let them for the Honour of CHRISTIANITY, be eternally suppressed.—I am forced then to return, Sir, to the Point whence I set out, and to acknowledge *the Right* which every Man has, in Things of Religion,

to *call no Man upon Earth* MASTER, but to examine and judge, and chuſe for himſelf.

As to the *Manner* in which the Choice of our Miniſters is conducted, againſt which you except, I believe no Elections of any kind, are tranſacted with greater *Fairneſs* and *Equity* than theſe. And the Nature of the Thing ſpeaks, that thus it muſt be. For *ours* being *Aſſemblies* formed only by *Conſent*, and ſupported only by *voluntary* Contributions of their Members, any oppreſſive or iniquitous Management would throw them preſently into Confuſion, diſband and break them up. To your Queſtion—*Who are the Electors?* And to all the Objections you raiſe on that Head—I reply, by praying you to turn your Eyes, Sir, to a *Britiſh Parliament*, or to an *Engliſh Convocation*, and tell me *who are the Electors?* And how *is the Choice conducted?* But if both the *Parliament* and *Convocation*, notwithſtanding the enormous Diſproportion and Inequality of the *Electors*, be yet *accounted* and *gloried in* as the REPRESENTATIVE of the Nation; and you compliment your *Fellow Britons* upon their *invaluable Privilege* in being ruled by Laws of *their own making*, and in paying no Taxes, but what *themſelves* by their Repreſentatives, have *conſented to levy*.—Your Exceptions to our Elections will be preſently withdrawn, and you will ſtill give us Leave to *glory*, as poſſeſſing this ancient undoubted Right of the Chriſtian Church.

But 'tis Time, Sir, that I now releaſe your Patience and Attention, having ſtrained, I fear, both to their utmoſt Extent. There are many other Parts of your Letters as liable to Remark, as thoſe I have taken Notice of, but I would not be tedious.—I might have expoſtulated with you largely on your reading, as Parts of your public Worſhip, the fabulous and groſs *Legends* of *Bel and the Dragon*, of *Judith* and *Suſannah*; and above all, the *magical Romance* of receiving a fair Virgin from the Inchantments of her

her *infernal Lover*, and conjuring away the *amorous* Devil *Asmodeus*, by the Fumes of a Fish's Liver—Is it for the Honour of the *Christian* Name, think you, Sir, to have such *spurious and idle Tales* read solemnly in our Churches (if *solemnly* they can be read) and made Parts of our *public Worship?* What will an *Unbeliever* think, when present at such Worship! When he sees *such Things* not only bound up with the HOLY SCRIPTURES, but commanded to be read *as such* in the *Order* of the Common Prayer! Will it not heighten his Contempt of the *Credulity* of Believers, and establish his Prejudices against the History, the Miracles, and Doctrines of CHRIST?—

I might also have asked you, Sir, to what *Oriental* DEITY you pay your Devoirs, when from the *North*, the *South*, the *West*, the Worshippers in your Church on certain solemn Occasions, turn reverently towards *the* EAST, and make their *peculiar* Honours? To WHOM, Sir, I beseech you, are these *peculiar* Honours paid? Not surely to the *immense, omnipresent* JEHOVAH; he is an INFINITE *Spirit*, you know, alike present in all Places; not more confined to one Quarter of the Heavens, than to another: To represent him as *being so*, is to dishonour and offend him, to detract from the Glory of his *Immensity* or *Omnipresence*, and to give Men very false and unworthy Notions of GOD. This worshipping towards *the* EAST, is not, I think, *ordered* by any *Canon* of your Church, which is now generally received; but 'tis (if I mistake not) its *common* and *prevailing* Practice. I should be glad to be informed, for I assure you, Sir, I am quite ignorant, what *Shadow of Ground*, either from Reason or Scripture, you can possibly pretend, for this unaccountable *Superstition*, for such you must allow me at present to think it. If you say, the Worship is paid *toward the* ALTAR, this seems to make the Matter more inexplicable still. For *what* is there in *the* ALTAR to make it a proper Object

of

of *religious* Veneration? Indeed, whilſt the *Breaden* God was upon it, the People who believed it to be the *very Body of* Christ, did well to pay their Homage to it: But now *that* Idol is taken thence, I cannot for my Life perceive, what Shadow of *Divinity* Proteſtants ſee in the Altar, that they ſhould give it *religious* Honours.

As much, Sir, am I at a Loſs, when endeavouring to reconcile to Reaſon and good Senſe, another of your *additional Beauties and Splendors* of public Worſhip, *viz. Bowing at the Name of* Jesus. As for that Paſſage of the Apoſtle, *Philip.* ii. 10. *That at the Name of* Jesus *every Knee ſhall bow*—the *learned Men* of your Church, I preſume, *univerſally* diſclaim it, as in the leaſt *authorizing* or *injoining* this Practice. Your great Dr. *Nichols* * vindicates your Church from ſuch an *uncouth and ridiculous Abuſe* of this Text, and affirms, *that it is not once mentioned in any of your eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions*, as to this Matter; and adds, *that you are not* so dull *as to think, that thoſe Words can be rigorouſly applied to this Purpoſe.* But if *this Text* be acknowledged not in the leaſt to authorize or require this *Act of Worſhip*, what Shadow of Argument, Sir, can you poſſibly bring, either from *Reaſon* or *Scripture*, which ſhall ſo much as ſeem to ſupport it? Why then does your Church command (Canon XVIII.) *that when in Time of divine Service the* Lord Jesus *ſhall be mentioned, duly and lowly Reverence ſhall be done by all Perſons preſent?* Is not *this*, Sir, by your own Confeſſion, an Act of *Will Worſhip*, a *Commandment*, an *Invention of Men*, not in the leaſt founded upon the Authority and Will of God!

But why, Sir, muſt this *lowly Reverence* be made at the *Name of* Jesus, and not at the Name of Christ, at the Name Immanuel, JEHOVAH, or GOD? Is there not in *all theſe*, ſomething at leaſt *as* venerable

* Defence, &c. Part. II. p. 319.

venerable and worthy of *peculiar* Honours; indeed something *much more* ſo, than there is in the *Name of* JESUS; *a Name* not at all *peculiar* to our bleſſed Saviour, but which was *common* to him with a great many other Men?——But if this *peculiar Reverence* muſt be made at the *Name of* JESUS, why not at *all Times* whenever 'tis mentioned, at leaſt in public Worſhip? Why in the *Creed* only, which is but a *human* Compoſition, and not every Time 'tis read from the *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles*, which were indited by the HOLY GHOST? But I preſs no further *a Point*, which I believe few of your own Church think capable of a rational and ſolid Defence.—

I have now finiſhed my Reply, Sir, to *the Letters* with which you have publickly honoured me, and have with Freedom ſet before you, the chief *Difficulties* and *Objections* which keep me in a State of Separation from your Church. If by calm and fair Argument, you can ſhew my Objections to be futilous and weak, I ſhall with Pleaſure become your *Convert*, and readily obey the Calls of worldly Intereſt and Honour.

But as you, Sir, have the *Dignities*, *Emoluments*, and *Powers* of this World on your Side, you muſt give us Leave to think, at leaſt till we are better taught, that we have TRUTH on our's. TRUTH, which is GREAT, and *will finally prevail*. Nor am I, Sir, without Hope, that, upon an *impartial* Review of the Merits of the Cauſe betwixt us, *omnipotent* TRUTH may even bend *your* Mind towards us; and diſpoſe you, like *one* who has ſince had the Honour of being called the *great Apoſtle*, to join yourſelf to *thoſe* you once cenſured and deſpiſed.

What though we have not the *Honours* and *Profits* of this World to draw you to our Communion, are we ever the leſs like to be the genuine *Apoſtolic Church* of a crucified, deſpiſed, inſulted JESUS for this? Hath he not expreſly told us, that *His*

Kingdom

Kingdom is not of this World *.—That *whoever will come after him, muſt deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs* †.—That *not many mighty and noble are called?* ‡—Are not the *Witneſſes to* TRUTH, *to Prophecy, cloathed in Sackcloth* §, till the promiſed *Times of Refreſhing* come from the Appearance of CHRIST? Is not the PURE Apoſtolic Church, the *true Spouſe of* CHRIST, repreſented in the *Revelation* as a *Woman driven into the Wilderneſs*, ‖ *i. e.* in an afflicted and forſaken State; whilſt the *corrupt* and *antichriſtian* Church (the apoſtate Church of *Rome*) is careſſed and enriched by the *Kings of the Earth* ¶, glittering in all the Pomp and Splendor of this World, wantoning in Luxury, Power, and Wealth? Does TRUTH need the Charms of *earthly Grandeur* to recommend it, or the Force of *civil Power* to ſpread or to eſtabliſh it? Was it *thus* the bleſſed GOSPEL was at firſt propagated, made its Way, and prevailed over all the Earth? No, worldly Grandeur and Power have *generally*, you well know, Sir, if not *evermore*, been extremely *injurious* to it; have enervated, obſtructed, under Pretence of improving, have greatly corrupted and depraved it, and have robbed it of its *native* Beauty, and Glory, and Strength.

High Dignities and Preferments, Mitres and Thrones, Lordſhips and large Revenues, have a mighty Force, you will own Sir, to *biaſs* and *pervert* the Mind, in its Searches after TRUTH. Theſe are not *the Means* which the GOD *of* TRUTH uſes, to *draw* the Mind to it; but you know they are *the Means*, which the *great* ENEMY is wont to uſe, to *ſeduce* the Mind from it. 'Tis therefore, I apprehend, Sir, no Preſumption at all in Favour of *any Church*, that it ſhines with all the Glory of worldly Honours and Wealth. This the *prophetic Scriptures* very clearly deſcribe as

* John xviii. 36. † Matt. xvi. 24. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 26.
§ Rev. xi. 3. ‖ Ibid. xii. 14, ¶ ibid, xvii. 4, 5—13—17.

as the State of the *false Church*, whilſt the *true Church* of JESUS CHRIST, his genuine and faithful Followers, are to be a *little, deſpiſed Flock:* A *Sect every where ſpoken againſt:* In the World it is *to have Tribulation*, till the expected *happy Period*, when it ſhall be *the* FATHER'*s good Pleaſure to give them* THE KINGDOM.

Let not then the *low Eſtate* of our Intereſt, as to the preſent World, at all frighten or diſcourage you, Sir, from caſting in your Lot amongſt us. *The World paſſeth away*, and all its Glories and Pomp will ſoon vaniſh like a Dream before the deſcending *Son of* GOD, whom we ſtedfaſtly expect.—And then to be *found faithful*; and to have ſtuck with *unſhaken* LOYALTY to the ONLY Lawgiver, Lord, and *King* of the Church.—To have *denied ourſelves* any worldly Honours, Preferments or Profits out of Conſcience towards *Him.*—To have been *ſeparated from Mens Company*, caſt out and reproach'd, becauſe we would not make a Sacrifice of our Virtue and Integrity to the Applauſe of *the Many*, or the Favour of *the Great.*—Will yield divine Comfort, and procure *immortal Honours* in the everlaſting *Kingdom* of GOD. Pardon me, Sir, if I am here acting a little out of Character, and ſeem to invade *your* Office: For I am extremely ambitious of engaging ſo ingenious a Gentleman amongſt us.

Theſe, Sir, are the Proſpects with which *Diſſenters* ſupport themſelves under all their Diſadvantages with regard to the preſent World. They remember WHOSE *Diſciples* and *Followers* they are—WHO *it is* that hath ſaid, IN VAIN *do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrine the* COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.—WHO hath ſtrictly charg'd them *to call* NO MAN *upon Earth* MASTER, becauſe ONE *only is their* MASTER, *even* CHRIST.—And, finally, WHO *it is* that hath promiſed, that *if any Man ſhall forſake Houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters, or Children, or Lands,*

for his Names Sake; he shall receive an hundred fold; and shall inherit EVERLASTING LIFE.

I now conclude, Sir, by beseeching you very carefully to remember, that the Controversy betwixt us depends *absolutely* and *entirely* upon the Decision of this *single Point.*—Is there *any* OTHER *Lawgiver* or *King* in the Church of GOD, to whose *Authority* and *Command*, as to Things of Religion, CHRISTIANS are bound to submit, BESIDES JESUS CHRIST? Or is there not?—If there be *no other* Lawgiver, *besides* JESUS CHRIST, *no other* King, *no other* Authority to whose *Decrees* in Point of Doctrine, and to whose *Injunctions* in Point of Worship, CHRISTIANS are obliged, and ought to *submit:* then *the* DISSENTERS in every impartial Judgment, will be, must be *justified:* then They *act right:* then they ought to be *commended*, and will surely be *rewarded* for adhering loyally and firmly to the ONE *only* KING and LORD of the Church: And for faithfully Opposing the Claims of *any* OTHER *Power*; and for Refusing Obedience to the Injunctions of *any* OTHER *Lawgiver*; and the Decisions of *any* OTHER *Judge*; who hath made *other* Articles of Faith, *other* Terms of Communion, *other* Rites of Worship, BESIDES and ABOVE those which CHRIST himself has made.

For to illustrate the Case.—If any *foreign Prince* shall pretend to make Laws, and prescribe Rules of Action to the People of *these Realms*, and shall exact Obedience to his Injunctions from the Subjects of *King* GEORGE; I ask, does not your *Allegiance* to HIM, your ONLY Sovereign, *require* and *oblige* you to make your Protest against any such Laws, and to *refuse* your Obedience to them? But is not the Church *a Province* in which CHRIST ALONE is *King*, as much as these Realms are the Dominions ONLY of *King* GEORGE? If any *human Potentate* then shall rise up in *the Church*, and shall claim

claim *Authority* and *Dominion* over the Conſciences of CHRIST's Subjects; Authority as to *Things of Faith*, to decree what HE hath not decreed; and Dominion as to *Things of Worſhip*, to appoint Rites and Inſtitutions which HE hath not appointed; I aſk you, Sir, does not your *Allegiance* to CHRIST, your ONLY Sovereign, *require* and *oblige* you to enter your Proteſt againſt ſuch *uſurp'd Authority*, and to refuſe your Obedience to it?

This, Sir, I repeat it, becauſe I earneſtly intreat your peculiar Attention to it, is the *eſſential* and *important* Point upon which the Controverſy betwixt us entirely turns. If you *can* prove, that there is ANOTHER Lawgiver, ANOTHER Judge, ANOTHER King in the Church *beſides* JESUS CHRIST, to whoſe Authority we are to ſubmit in Things of Religion; and that the *King* and *Parliament* of theſe Realms are this *Lawgiver*, and this *Judge*; you will then at once gain your Point; and by that *ſingle Blow* you will entirely overthrow the *diſſenting* Intereſt and Churches, We will immediately become your Converts; and flock into the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*.

But if you *cannot* prove this Point; you then *yield* the Cauſe to us; you then, in effect, own us *juſtified* before the World; and you leave us to indulge the rational and reviving Hope of being acknowledg'd by our *great* LAWGIVER, at his Return into the World, as his *loyal* and *obedient* Subjects; of being advanced to *peculiar* Honours and Dignities in his Kingdom, as we have here ſuffer'd on Account of our *Duty* and *Allegiance* to him; and of receiving from *our* JUDGE, before Angels and Men, that Sentence of Applauſe—*Well done* GOOD *and* FAITHFUL *Servants, enter ye into the Joy of your* LORD.

I have only to add, Sir, that this *Principle*—— That CHRIST is the *only* Lawgiver and King in his Church; and that no Man, no Body of Men upon Earth, have any Authority to make Laws,

or to prescribe Things *in Religion*, which shall oblige the Consciences of his Subjects; is *the grand*, *the only* Principle, upon which the UNITY, the PURITY, and the PEACE of the *Christian Church* can possibly subsist. Take away *this*, and you let in endless Discords and Corruptions into it: You split it into Parties: You make CHRISTIANITY one Thing, in one Country; a quite different, in another. In *England* you make it wear an *Episcopal* Form: In *Scotland*, a *Presbyterian*: In *France*, a *Popish*: In *Denmark*, a *Lutheran*: In *Prussia*, a *Calvinist*: In *Russia*, a *Grecian*, &c.——But ought these Things to be so? Is CHRIST *divided?* Is this the UNITY of his one beautiful, well-compacted *Body?* Can these be *all* genuine apostolick CHRISTIANITY?—Rather, are either of them so?—When the *Powers of this World* take upon them *authoritatively* to interpret and prescribe in Things of Religion, which are CHRIST's Kingdom and Province, they act beyond their Sphere: They invade the Throne of *another* Prince: The certain Consequence of which is Confusions, Separations; the *Unity* of the Church is broken, the Rights of *Christians* violated, a Gate open'd for innumerable Superstitions and Inventions to enter, and mingle with the pure Doctrines of CHRIST; and hence necessarily flow Schisms, Emulations, Contentions, and every evil Work.—

I beseech you, Sir, by the *Mercies of* GOD; and for the *Honour of* CHRISTIANITY; and by the *Allegiance* you owe your ONLY *Lawgiver* JESUS CHRIST, to weigh these Things in an impartial and unbiass'd Mind. May his *Spirit of* TRUTH judge betwixt us upon the Point, and teach us his Will! To his Influence I commend you, Sir, and am,

With great Sincerity,

Your very Humble Servant,

A DISSENTER.

POSTSCRIPT.

Containing Remarks on the DEFENCE *of your Three Letters.*

THE above Letter being ſent to the Preſs before your *Defence*, &c. was advertiſed; its Publication was ſtaid, till I had ſeen what Occaſion it might give, either to retract or ſupport what was offer'd in my *firſt Letter*. You ſeem moved at its pretending to be an Anſwer to your *three Letters*, when ſo ſmall a Part of them is conſider'd therein: And with Airs quite ſuitable to the Cauſe you are pleading, *eccleſiaſtical Authority*, give me to underſtand, that your taking any notice of this Performance is to be conſider'd as a Condeſcenſion to which you were not obliged, and which I had no Right to expect from you. But, pray recollect: What was the avow'd Deſign and Purport of your Letters? Was it not to *refute the great and popular Objections of the Diſſenters*, and *to bring me over to your Church?* But upon Reading your Letters, I found you had ſcarce touch'd upon the *principal Objection* which kept me from your Church. Was it not then my Part to ſtate the Objection to you, and ſet it in its full Light? As *unaſk'd*, you had taken on you to be my Inſtructor in this Affair; had I not a Right to lay my Difficulty before you, and to demand your Solution of it? What, muſt I *confine* myſelf to *the Pleas* which *you* had ſeen fit to cook up for the Diſſenters; and if I preſume to offer *others*, will you magiſterially call them *Ramblings*,

in

in which you are not obliged to follow? Very pleaſant indeed!

Here therefore I now put in my Claim, Sir, and *give you to underſtand*, that I expect your plain and full Anſwer to the *ſeveral Objections* againſt your *eſtabliſh'd Forms* preſented in the above Letter: Some of which, tho' you knew them to be of great Weight with Diſſenters, you dextrouſly avoided bringing into the Debate. To this you are moſt clearly and indiſpenſibly obliged by *the Province* you have taken on you. If there be any Parts of the *Liturgy* indefenſible and abſurd, this (1.) condemns *your own* CONFORMITY, who not only declare, but ſolemnly ſubſcribe your *unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent to* ALL *and* EVERY THING *contained in and preſcribed by the Book of Common Prayer*, &c. And, (2.) it juſtifies *the* SEPARATION, by proving it a ſevere and cruel Thing to caſt out above 2000 of our Miniſters from the Church for not declaring and ſubſcribing this *unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent*, &c. which began the *Separation*.

This being premiſed, we come to the Point of *Church Authority*, upon which the Controverſy turns. Here I obſerve, with pleaſure, that you are for mutilating your XXth Article, ridding your Hands of one Part, and holding only to the other. "*The* "*Church's Authority in Matters of Faith, you have* "*nothing*, you ſay, *to do with* *."—But *this*, you know, your Church claims as much as *a Power to make Ceremonies*; and againſt this Part of its Claim I as much excepted as againſt the other. When you declare therefore *you have nothing to do with it*, you mean, if I take you right, you will not pretend to undertake its Defence. This to be ſure is wiſe: No Man upon Earth being able to defend it. But then, is it not extremely hard that your Church ſhould ſtill *inflexibly* maintain its Claim to *this Authority*: Should force its *Clergy* to ſubſcribe and acknowledge this

* Defence, p. 18.

this Claim; and keep Diſſenters from a Share in thoſe Emoluments, "*after which*, you ſay, *they* "*languiſh*," partly for refuſing their ſolemn Subſcription to ſo *unreaſonable* a Claim?

"By the Church's Power to decree Rites and "Ceremonies, is meant, a Right in the Paſtors and "Governors thereof, to ordain and appoint ſuch "Things, ſo as to make it, *ordinarily*, the Duty of "the People to conform themſelves to them. *"— You have artfully declined to ſay, *whom* you underſtand by its *Paſtors and Governors*; but from other Paſſages† it is evident you mean the *Biſhops and Clergy*; for the *Civil Magiſtrate*, you declare, *has no ſuch Power at all*‡. Now,

1. That the *Clergy* have no Power nor Authority at all of this kind over the *Laity*, I proved beyond all doubt from the expreſs Command of our great Lawgiver.—*Call no Man upon Earth* MASTER; ONE *is* YOUR MASTER, *even* CHRIST, *and all ye are Brethren*§. *The Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe Dominion and Authority over them, but it* SHALL NOT BE SO *amongſt you*‖. What have you ſaid in Anſwer to theſe Texts? Not a ſingle Word. You leave them to ſtand in full Force againſt you: And without one Text of Scripture to ſupport this Authority of the *Clergy* over the *Laity*, you go on to treat it as a Thing indiſputable and allow'd: And labour hard in raiſing a pompous Structure upon the Sand. What you ſay as to the *Kiſs of Charity*, has been conſider'd above, p. 29. Should even *this* be allow'd to be a *merely eccleſiaſtical and prudential Inſtitution*, it will by no means eſtabliſh the *Authority* you claim for your *Paſtors and Governors*; the Orders, Decrees, and Appointments of thoſe Times being by the *common Conſent* and *Suffrage* of the whole Church; in which the *Laity* had an equal, if not a far greater, Share of Authority than the *Clergy*¶. But,

2. Your

* Def. p. 10. † Lett. II. p. 14. ‡ Def. p. 18. § Mat. xxiii. 8, 9. ‖ Mat. xx. 25. ¶ Vid. Exam. of the *Codex*, p. 120.

2. Your lodging this Power in the *Paſtors and Governors* abſolutely contradicts *the Articles* themſelves. For as the XXth Art. claims it for *the Church:* So the immediately preceding Art. (XIX.) expreſly defines what it means by THE CHURCH, *viz. A Congregation of faithful Men where the pure Word of God is preach'd.*—'Tis to the *whole Body* of the Faithful then that this Power of decreeing Ceremonies, if any ſuch there be, belongs: How then do you preſume, Sir, to wreſt it from them, and to veſt it ſolely in the *Clergy?* And,

3. When you add, *that to this Right of the Paſtors to decree Ceremonies, it is the Peoples Duty,* ORDINARILY, *to conform themſelves:* The Word, *ordinarily*, ſeems thrown in as a Miſt to darken the Point; a ſeaſonable *Salvo* to which to retreat when you feel yourſelf puſh'd. What mean you, Sir, by *ordinarily?* How ſhall the People know *when* it is, and *when* it is not, their Duty to ſubmit to theſe Injunctions of their ſpiritual Governors? Are the People themſelves to judge, *always* to judge, of the Fitneſs and Expedience of the injoined Ceremonies; or are they not? If they are not, then they are *abſolutely* to reſign themſelves to the Direction of their Governors; which is palpable and groſs *Popery*, and leads directly to *Rome.* But if they are, then the *Babel* of Church-Authority is at once over-thrown: For then the Authority reſides no longer in *the Decrees* of the Governors, but in *the Judgment* of the People. 'Tis the Judgment *they* form of them, which *alone* makes them binding upon them or not. Of *their Number*, whether they are too many; and of *their Nature* whether they are ſuperſtitious, foppiſh, and vain, you ſeem ſometimes to allow, *the People* are to judge: But if they have a Right *to judge*, they have a Right alſo *to act* in Conſequence of that Judgment; and to withdraw from thoſe Churches where ſuch Ceremonies are injoin'd, as *they think* foppiſh and vain;

and

and to join themſelves to others, where *they think* the Worſhip of GOD perform'd in a more ſcriptural and proper Manner. So then, the ſolemn Parade of *Church-Authority*, you ſee, turns out a mere Shadow. 'Tis an Authority to command, which no one is under Obligation to obey. This Power of *making Ceremonies* muſt be either limited or unlimited: If it be not *unlimited* (which you ſeem to diſavow) Pray *what* is it limits it? *What* preſcribes its bounds, *beyond which it ſhall not paſs*? If the Church has Power to ordain *five* Ceremonies, why not *ten*? And if *ten*, why not more? Who ſhall pretend to ſay how far it may go?

Your Illuſtration "*as to the King's Injunctions*," &c. * will not reach the Caſe; becauſe the Conſtitution and Laws of *England* empower the King to make ſuch Injunctions: But you have not yet proved, and I preſume never will prove, that the Conſtitution of the *Chriſtian Church* empowers its Paſtors to *decree* Ceremonies and Rites.

You aſk †—"Where does the Church pretend "*to be alone the proper Judge*, or where diſallow "*private Chriſtians* to judge for themſelves in theſe "Matters?" I will tell you, Sir, in its XXXIVth Article, which decrees, that *whoſoever thro' his* PRIVATE JUDGMENT, *willingly and purpoſely doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of* GOD, *and be ordain'd by common Authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth againſt the common Order of the Church, and hurteth the* AUTHORITY *of the* MAGISTRATE. *Private Judgment*, you ſee, is here *forbid* to oppoſe the *common Order* of the Church, and the *Authority of the Magiſtrate*; and when it preſumes ſo to do, is to be cenſured and puniſhed for it.

* Def. p. 14. † P. 13.

" The Church of *France*, and the Church of *Rome*, you acknowledge, to be as much poſſeſſed " of this Power as the Church of *England*: But it " does not follow, that becauſe they have a Power " to decree *Rites*, that they may therefore decree " *Popperies* and *Superſtitions**."—But by what Mark, I pray, do you diſtinguiſh betwixt *Rites* and *Popperies*; betwixt *Ceremonies* and *Superſtitions?* The Conſecrating of Ground in the *Church of England* is a Rite, but the Conſecrating of Water in the *Church of France* is a Foppery. — The Prieſt's ſigning the baptiſed Infant with the Sign of the Croſs, in Token that it ſhall confeſs a crucified Chriſt, is a ſignificant Rite: But his putting his Finger into its Ear, in Token that it ſhall hear the Word of GOD; or Salt upon its Tongue, in Token that its Speech ſhall be ſeaſon'd with Salt, are intolerable Fopperies.—Can you help bleſſing yourſelf, Sir, in the Refinement and Delicacy of ſuch Diſtinctions! — The Bowings to the Altar, bowing at the Name of *Jeſus*, Kneeling at the Communion, Sponſors, Surplice, Hoods, Lawn Sleeves, and every thing of this kind uſed in the Church of *England*, are edifying and decent Ceremonies, " *of clear Signification* " *and indiſputable Uſe*†:" But the Slippers and Staff, Knocking on the Breaſt, Elevations, Croſſings, Geſticulations, Sprinklings with holy Water, *&c.* practiſed in the Church of *Rome*, are ridiculous Superſtitions —How happy to have Governors thus ſpiritually gifted; able to diſtinguiſh betwixt Things that differ!

" My Suggeſtion, that by the mere Conceſſions " of your XXth Article Thouſands of Proſelytes " have been gain'd from you to the Church of " *Rome*, is raſh, you ſay, and groundleſs: Nor " do you believe I can name *one* who was ever " gain'd by it‡."—I will give you two Inſtances almoſt equal to a thouſand. The *firſt* ſhall be the renowned *Chillingworth*, who was gain'd to the Church of *Rome*, chiefly by this Argument, *viz.*

* Def. p. 11. † P. 11. ‡ P. 15. *The*

The Neceſſity of an infallible living Judge of Controverſies *:* Which is but a different Expreſſion for the *Authority of the Church in Matters of Faith.* Now if this Argument was ſo plauſible as to vanquiſh, and lead captive ſo great a Maſter of Reaſon, Multitudes of weaker Minds have, no doubt, fallen by its Force. The other ſhall be King *James* II, of whom Biſhop *Burnet* ſays, he gave me this Account of the *Change of his Religion.*— "All due "Care was taken to form him to a ſtrict Adhe- "rence to the Church: Amongſt other Things "much was ſaid of the AUTHORITY *of the Church*, "and of the Tradition from the Apoſtles in ſup- "port of *Epiſcopacy.* So when he came to obſerve "that there was more Reaſon to *ſubmit* to the *Ca- "tholic Church*, than to *one particular Church*; and "that other Traditions might be taken on her "Word, as well as *Epiſcopacy* was received amongſt "us, he thought the Step was not great, but that "it was *very reaſonable* to go over to the Church "of *Rome* †." See how dangerous a Weapon is this ſame *Church-Authority:* And how capable of being uſed to the infinite Prejudice of the Proteſtant Cauſe!

"But granting this Authority of the Church, "(*i. e.* of its Paſtors and Governors, its Biſhops "and Clergy) How, you aſk, would our *Refor- "mation* be overthrown by it; which was not car- "ried on in Oppoſition to Authority, but with the "Concurrence of all the Authority in the Nation ‡?" Strange, Sir, you ſhould ſo ſoon forget! Did not I remember you that the *Reformation* under Queen *Elizabeth*, and the preſent Forms of Worſhip preſcribed in the Common Prayer, were ſtrongly oppoſed by *every Biſhop* in the Kingdom; and the *Convocation* then ſitting, were ſo far from having any hand in it, that they preſented to the Parliament

* Vid. Life of *Chillingworth*, p. 7. † *Burnet*'s Hiſt. of his own Times, Octav. Edit, Vol. I. p. 194. ‡ Def. p. 15.

ment ſeveral Propoſitions in favour of *Popery*, directly contrary to the Proceedings of the Parliament? The *Civil Magiſtrate*, you affirm, *has no Power at all, nor Authority in theſe Matters* *. They are the *Paſtors* and *Governors* of the Church, in whom alone it is lodged. But behold, theſe Paſtors and Governors were zealous for the old Religion! They argued, voted, petitioned ſtrenuouſly for it, and againſt the *Reformation*. The Reformation then, upon your Principles, is built upon a wrong Bottom: Was carried on, not in Concurrence with, but in avow'd Oppoſition to, *all the Authority of the Nation*. How juſtly might I here return your own ungenerous Compliment, *It was great Raſhneſs (too great in Conſcience) if indeed it was not* TREACHERY *and* PLAYING BOOTY, *to ſet the Proteſtant Cauſe upon ſo ſandy a Foundation* †. Your Principles, if digeſted into proper Form, will ſtand thus.—"The Church hath Power and Authority "to decree Ceremonies and Rites: But by *the* "*Church*, obſerve, I underſtand, not the King and "Parliament, not the Civil Magiſtrate, who have "no Power at all relating to theſe Matters; but "the *Biſhops* only and *Clergy*, who are appointed "and called of GOD to be its *Paſtors* and *Gover*"*nors*: But remember, my Countrymen, the "Common Prayer, and Forms of Worſhip now "eſtabliſhed and uſed amongſt you, were intro"duced into this Church, not by *the Authority*, no, "nor yet by *the Conſent* of the Paſtors and Go"vernors whom GOD hath ſet over it, but in direct "*Oppoſition* to them. It was *a Change* brought about "entirely by the *Civil Magiſtrate*, who had no Au"thority to effect it. It was therefore really no "other than an eccleſiaſtical Rebellion, an unjuſti"fiable Revolt from the only rightful Rulers and "Governors of the Church in its ſpiritual Con"cerns."——

This,

* Def. p. 18. † P. 19.

This, Sir, is the plain Language and Tendency of your Principles; though I know you have been so wise as to contradict them again, by allowing, "*that if Church Governors will not come into such* "*Reformation, as is according to* GOD'S *Word, but* "*obstinately persevere in maintaining their sinful Er-* "*rors and Corruptions, the People may reform them-* "*selves* *."—But this *Concession* overthrows your whole Scheme of *Church Authority*, makes THE PEOPLE the *supreme* and *ultimate* Judges, as to Points of Faith and Rites of Worship; brings down the Decrees of the most numerous and most holy Councils, Convocations, and Synods, to stand at the Bar of *every Man*'s private Judgment; and vests him with *Authority* to receive or reject them, as to *himself* shall seem fit. So powerful is Truth, which will prevail!

But your Positions as to the *Civil Magistrate*, deserve a more distinct and accurate Consideration. "He has no Power at all to decree Rites in divine "Worship †—This Power is not in the King and "Parliament, for in this very Article (XX.) which, "together with the rest, is confirmed by Act of "Parliament (13 *Eliz.* c. 12.) and thereby made "a Part of our ecclesiastical Constitution, they "have plainly owned it to be in *the Church*; and "no body imagines, that by the Church they meant "*themselves*. The King and Parliament then have "plainly disowned any such Power in themselves, "and have recognized it to be in the Church ‡."—This, Sir, is a Doctrine, of dangerous and important Consequence, and quite contrary to Fact. For,

1. As 'twas the *Queen* and *Parliament* alone, without, yea in Opposition to, the *Bishops* and *Convocation*, which decreed the present Form and Worship of your Church, and to their Authority alone it owes its very Being, Birth, and Support; by affirming

* Def. p. 13. † Ibid. p. 18. ‡ Ibid. p. 17.

affirming that they had *no Power* nor *Authority of this Nature*, you knock down and demoliſh the *Church of England* at once, and lay it proſtrate in the Duſt. And,

2. That the King and Parliament by acknowledging this Power to be in *the Church*, have not *diſclaimed* it, nor put it out of their own Hands, is inconteſtible hence, that they have at the ſame Time expreſly told you, what they mean by *the Church*; not the Biſhops and Clergy, but the *Congregation of the Faithful*; of which Congregation *themſelves* are not only a Part, but the *principal* and *ruling* Part: And accordingly, our Laws and Conſtitution have veſted the *ſupreme Power* of preſcribing Ceremonies and Rites, *only* in them. I aſk you—By *what Authority* do the Rubricks of the Common Prayer, bind the Clergy to Obedience; or *whence* is it, they are obliged to obſerve the Rites and Forms preſcribed in that Book? Is it not *entirely* by the Authority and Act of *Parliament*? As for the Paſtors and Governors to whom you *appropriate* this Authority, (the Biſhops and Clergy,) they have no Power by our Conſtitution to make one ſingle Law, to decree one Rite, or to preſcribe one Ceremony: When aſſembled in Convocation, they are abſolutely under the Controul and Direction of the Civil Power. "Even the very Subjects of their En-"quiry and Debate, as well as the Extent of their "Ordinances in Point of Obligation, are preſcribed "by *Statute Law*, that they cannot ſo much as at-"tempt any Canons or Conſtitutions, without a "Royal Licence; and that none of their Ordi-"nances are binding, even againſt the private "Cuſtoms of a ſingle Pariſh *." How is it then you affirm, *the King and Parliament to have diſowned any ſuch Power in themſelves, and to have recognized it to be in the Church?* But,

3. The

* Examinat. of the Codex, p. 114.

3. The Point is if poſſible, ſtill rendered more clear from the XXXIVth Article above cited; which ſays, *If any Man through his private Judgment, openly breaks the Ceremonies of the Church, ordained by* COMMON AUTHORITY, *he ſhall be openly rebuked, as one who offendeth againſt the common Order of the Church, and hurteth the* AUTHORITY OF THE MAGISTRATE.—The *Authority of the Magiſtrate* then, is indiſputably concerned in *ordaining* theſe Ceremonies: And your Church, Sir, however loath you are to hear it, is undoubtedly a *Parliamentary* and *Civil* Conſtitution; made, formed, ſupported entirely by the Civil Magiſtrate, and by him alone is it capable of being thrown into a new Form.

But you aſk, "Are not the Diſſenting Churches "in the ſame Senſe *Parliamentary?* Do they not "depend entirely upon an Act of Parliament, the "Act of Toleration*?" No; the Diſſenting Churches were formed, ſubſiſted, and grew *without* and *before*, any Parliamentary Authority. We are thankful to the excellent and good Government under which we live, for the Act of Toleration. But would humbly beg Leave to ſay, we derive not our Power to aſſemble for divine Worſhip, nor our Miniſters theirs to officiate in ſuch Aſſemblies, from any human Law, but from our *natural Right* as Men, and from the Authority of CHRIST. The Act of Toleration only protects us in the Enjoyment of this Right.

"But above all Things you marvel, that whilſt "I was making this Puſh at the Church of *England* "I did not reflect how much *I laid myſelf open:* "For if there was ever upon Earth *a Church*, "which could properly be called *Parliamentary*, it "was the *Preſbyterian* in the Time of the *grand* "*Rebellion*†." What *you* call the *grand Rebellion*, Sir, a *Britiſh* HOUSE OF COMMONS, ſince the Reſtoration,

* Def. p. 21. † Ibid. p. 20.

ſtoration, call a *Vindication of their* JUST LIBERTIES; and brought one of their Members, *Lenthal*, upon his Knees at the Bar, and there ſharply reprimanded him, for preſuming to reflect upon it in the Manner you have done*. Beſides, if it was a *grand Rebellion*, the Shame and Reproach of it falls chiefly upon the *Church of England*; the *Parliament* who began it, conſiſting almoſt entirely of Members of that Communion, as Lord *Clarendon* himſelf owns. But, what if the *Preſbyterial* Church eſtabliſhed afterward by them was truly *Parliamentary*, how have *I laid myſelf open!* Had I ſaid or ſuggeſted any Thing at all relating to *that Church*, or the Proceedings of *thoſe Times?* Not a ſingle Word; but for ought I had ſaid, it appears not but I as much condemn that *Eſtabliſhment* as yourſelf. How then have *I laid myſelf open!* Are you, Sir, the Gentleman, that reproves me for *Ramblings?*

You put the Caſe, † "that any of our Diſſenting Churches, or the Church of *Scotland*, ſhould "by an Act of the general Aſſembly ordain, that "a decent Baſon, with clean Water ſhould be provided, and placed near the Pulpit, that ſo the "Miniſter taking the Child in his Arms, may "conveniently pour or ſprinkle Water upon its "Face, in the Name of the Father, &c. Here are "ſeveral Rites ordained, which Chriſt in his Wiſdom did not think proper to ordain, and one of "them at leaſt as exceptionable as any excepted "againſt in our Church, *Sprinkling*—What will "this Gentleman ſay to ſuch an Appointment?" I will ſay, Sir, that if Compliance with this Injunction be made a *neceſſary Term* of receiving Baptiſm in that Church (as the *Croſs* and *Sponſors* are made neceſſary in yours) ſo as that no Child ſhall be baptized, that is not *ſprinkled* from ſuch Baſon; and the Parent that deſires to have his Child dipt (believing

* Journal of the 12th of May 1660. † Def. p. 23, 24.

(believing *that* to be the only Way in which Chriſtian Baptiſm ought to be adminiſtered) ſhall not have it done; in that Caſe, Sir, I will ſay the Church acts a tyrannical, unjuſt, ſchiſmatical Part; and if I could have my Child baptized in any other Church, conſtituted upon a more *Catholic* and *Scriptural* Plan, I ſhould think it my Duty to apply to it on that Occaſion. The Spirit of Ceremony-making and Church Tyranny, is of a reſtleſs and incroaching Nature, and ought *timely* to be cruſhed. 'Twas from ſuch *little Beginnings*, the Maſs of *Romiſh* Fopperies grew up to its preſent enormous and oppreſſive Heighth.

" The *natural Rights* you repreſent ſome of our " Fellow-ſubjects as ſubmitting to be deprived of " by diſqualifying Laws, without going about to " *turn the World upſide down for their* Repeal *," are vaſtly too *trivial*, to be compared with thoſe of which Diſſenters are deprived; nor are they diſqualified as to theſe, upon the Account of *Conſcience* and *Religion* (the hard Caſe of Diſſenters) for acting as we think the Authority and Laws of GOD indiſpenſibly oblige us: Nor, finally, can the Perſons you mention, perhaps be properly ſaid to have a *natural Right*, to ſuſtain at the ſame Time two different Characters, and to execute two Offices which are generally inconſiſtent and interfere with each other—So the Caſes are not parallel. Beſides, why, are we repreſented as *turning the World upſide down?* Have we ever kindled Tumults, raiſed Mobs, demoliſhed Houſes, threatened Courts (as you know, Sir, who have done) —under a ſeditious Cry, that our *Churches were in Danger?* We appeal to the impartial World, for the Loyalty and Peaceableneſs with which we behave.

You paſs over, by your own Confeſſion, *almoſt half my Pamphlet* † unremarked; in which the Conſtitution of the Church of *England* is compared

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* Def. p. 6. 7. † Ibid. p. 37.

with that of the Church of CHRIST, and they are inconteſtibly ſhewn to be *Societies* of a quite different and even oppoſite Nature; ſo as that a Perſon's Separation from the one, does by no Means imply his Separation from the other. Your replying nothing to this, you will give me Leave to impute to ſome other Cauſe, than "*your* "*not obſerving any Thing in it, which pretends to* "*refute or contradict any Poſition advanced in your* "*Letter.*" Is not the Charge of *Schiſm* your favourite and conſtant Topic? But if I prove the *two Societies* ſo entirely different in their Conſtitution and Frame, as that my not communicating in the former, does in no wiſe break me off from, nor in the leaſt interrupt my Communion in the latter, is not this *a Refutation* of one of the chief and moſt intereſting Parts *of your Letters?* And did not Juſtice to your Argument demand, if you could have given it, a proper Reply?

"'Tis growing mighty modiſh, you complain, "with our People to laugh at all Notions of "Church Communion, and to make nothing of "the moſt unneceſſary Separations*." Yes, I thank GOD, the loud Peals you were wont to ring us upon the Head of *Schiſm*, are generally treated with pretty much Neglect, not only amongſt our People, but even amongſt your own. For when one ſees grave Gentlemen ſetting themſelves up for *Rulers* and *Governors* in the Name of the Lord, claiming Power to forgive Sins, to decree Ceremonies, to make Laws, and to determine Points of Faith; and then thundering out their Anathemas, upon ſuch as refuſe to ſubmit to their Authority.—What muſt this provoke in all ſenſible Spectators, but a Mixture of Contempt, Indignation, and Mirth.

Can theſe *ſpiritual Fathers* in their Conſciences, believe *our* SCHISM to be ſo horrid and ſo damning, and

* Def. p. 25.

and yet refuſe to drop the Ceremonies which they ſee to be the *Stone of Stumbling*, at which we ſo grievouſly and wickedly fall? What, for the Sake of a few Things which they own to be *indifferent*, will they harden themſelves againſt the Cries of ſo many periſhing miſguided *Chriſtians*, and *deſtroy the Souls for which Chriſt died!* Forgive me, Sir, if I cannot think it; but that *Schiſm* is only uſed as an *eccleſiaſtical Scarecrow*, to keep the Simple in Awe, and to eſtabliſh a ſacerdotal Empire over ductile and weak Minds.

" All Chriſtians, you affirm, living within the " Church of *England*, which is co-extended with " the Kingdom, may be truly ſaid to owe it Obe- " dience and Submiſſion, and are *de Jure*, whe- " ther they will be or not *de Facto*, true Members " and Subjects of it *." But pray tell me: Is not the *Church of Scotland* equally co extended with *that* Kingdom, as the *Church of England* is with *this?* And do not all who live within its Pale, owe it like Submiſſion? Is not the *Preſbyterian* Diſcipline and Worſhip as much eſtabliſhed there, as the *Epiſcopal* is here? If it be *Schiſm* then, and a grievous Sin for Diſſenters to withdraw from the eſtabliſhed Church in *South-Britain*, is it not *alike* ſchiſmatical and wicked in your Epiſcopal Brethren to withdraw from the Preſbyterian Church eſtabliſhed in *the North?* Whence is it we never hear from you any ſolemn Admonitions to your Brethren beyond the *Tweed*, of the deteſtable Sin of *Schiſm*; warning them of its damning Nature, and exhorting them ſpeedily to unite with the eſtabliſhed Church! Here your grave Lectures may poſſibly have good Effect; and if you really thought *Schiſm* ſo grievous an Offence as you affect to repreſent, 'tis ſtrange you never try the Power of your Perſuaſions with your Brethren in the

* Def. p. 29.

North. This would be a noble Proof that you were in earneſt, and ſincere. But whilſt, amidſt your warmeſt Harrangues againſt the *Engliſh* Separation, you encourage and ſupport the Diſſent from the *Scottiſh* Church; what can be thought of your Outcries about Schiſm, but that they deſerve a Name more ſevere than I am willing here to give?

Your Notion of our being "*true Members* of the "Church of *England de Jure*, tho' we are not, and "will *not be de Facto*"—is a Refinement, indeed, and quite ſurpaſſes my Comprehenſion. I thought it enter'd eſſentially into the Idea of *a Church*, that it is a *Society of* VOLUNTEERS: A Company join'd together in certain Acts and Profeſſions by *common* CONSENT: And that *without*, much leſs *againſt*, his own Agreement and Conſent, no Man could with Truth be ſtiled a Member of any Church. All Perſons living in Chriſtendom may be ſaid to owe *Jeſus Chriſt* Obedience and Submiſſion, with infinitely greater Reaſon than all the People of *England* can be ſaid to owe it to the Church; but does it therefore follow, that they are all *de Jure*, if they will not be *de Facto*, TRUE *Members* of the Church of *Chriſt?* What, thoſe who openly renounce *Chriſt*, declare him to be an Impoſtor, and utterly diſavow Obedience and Subjection to him, can *ſuch*, with any Truth or Propriety, be ſtiled *true Members* of his Church! Strange Divinity indeed! Chriſt's *Church* then, inſtead of a *Congregation of faithful Perſons*, may now be defined a Society of impious Blaſphemers, of Infidels and profane Perſons, who neither fear GOD, nor believe in *Jeſus Chriſt*; theſe all may be declared and treated as *true* Members of his Church. If this indeed be right, then with ſome Pretence it may be ſaid, that thoſe who openly renounce and diſclaim the Church of *England*, and declare they will

not

not live in any Subjection to it, may yet be consider'd as *true* Members of it.

I owe Allegiance to the *King* of *England*, because I receive Protection from him, and enjoy innumerable *civil* Blessings by means of his Government, under which I *consent* to live. But it does not hence follow, that I owe Subjection to the *Church* of *England*, (as you argue pag. 29.) from whom I receive no Protection, enjoy no Benefit nor Advantage, and in Communion with which I by no means *consent* to live. CONSENT, Sir, is indispensably and essentially necessary to form the Relation betwixt Pastors and People: And without this *Consent* no Church in any Christian or scriptural Sense can possibly be formed. *Dissenters* therefore can with no Justness nor Propriety in the World be stiled *true Members* of your Church. Your solemn Excommunications of them is really a Casting such out, as never were in it: So the Miracle still remains.

As to our *Posture* of receiving the Lord's Supper, instead of ingenuously owning your great *Misrepresentation*, you seek by frivolous and quaint Questions to raise a Dust to conceal it. As, "what "meaneth this *Informant*, by *some* of their Churches, "which have admitted kneeling? What by *some* "in their Churches? If there were any considera-"ble Number, *&c.* *." Their *Number*, give me leave to tell you, Sir, is nothing to the Purpose. 'Tis the LIBERTY they have to do it, is the only Point in Debate. If *all* have this *Liberty*, tho' not one in five thousand should actually use it; my Point stands firm, yours is overthrown; and you stand convicted before the World of having given a very wrong and injurious Account of us. You rashly asserted that *Sitting* among us was NEVER *allowed to be departed from*; *that our Ministers*

* Def. p. 32.

niſters INSISTED *upon, and* REFUSED *to abate it.*— This, from my own certain Knowledge, from the Information of others, from *Baxter*'s reform'd Liturgy, I proved to be a falſe Repreſentation. In the ſecond Edition of my Letter, (pag. 21.) I added a Paſſage from Dr. *Calamy's brief Account to the* German *Divines*, which expreſly ſays,—*The Communicants amonſt* PROTESTANT DISSENTERS *are* AT LIBERTY *to uſe their* OWN POSTURE *in the Time of Receiving*; *tho' a Table-Poſture is moſt commonly uſed. Note.* To this *brief Account*, &c. you appear to have been no Stranger; you had, doubtleſs, read it; for you quote a long Paſſage from it (Let. II. pag. 62.) not *four Lines* diſtant from that I have now cited. How then could you take upon you ſo roundly to affirm—*that it is* NEVER ALLOWED *to be departed from*, &c. When you had ſeen it declared to the World that our *Communicants were* AT LIBERTY *to uſe their* OWN POSTURE!

But if this deſerves an ingenuous Bluſh, I am called upon to bluſh with you, "For having ſaid "that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, without all perad- "venture, *ſat around the Table*, when every Body "knows, who knows any Thing at all, that they "uſed the recumbing Poſture, which is no more "Sitting than it is Kneeling *."—If my Aſſertion cannot be ſupported by indiſputable Authority, I have a Bluſh at your Command. Let my Vouchers be heard. St. *Matthew* † ſays, *he* SAT DOWN *with the twelve.—And as they were eating* JESUS *took Bread and bleſſed it.* St. *Mark* ‡, *As they* SAT *and did eat*, JESUS *took Bread*, &c. St. *Luke* §, *When the Hour was come, he* SAT DOWN, *and the twelve Apoſtles with him: And he took the Bread and gave Thanks.* If I am now to be *corrected* for repreſenting *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles as SITTING

* Def. p. 31. † xxvi. 20. ‡ xiv. 18. § xxii. 14.

SITTING *around the Table*, the Weight of the Stroke will fall entirely upon *the Scriptures*; under which Patronage I am safe. I make no manner of doubt, Sir, but the Posture was *sitting*, though with the Body, perhaps, a little *leaning* or *reclin'd*. Nor would our Language afford our Translators any better, or indeed any other Word, than *sitting* to express it by. Pray, how would you render it—*As they* RECUMBED *and did eat.*—*And when the Hour was come, he* RECUMBED *with his twelve Apostles?* If every Body "*who knows* "*any Thing at all, knows they used the recumbing* "*Posture*," then good Mr. *Henry* knew nothing at all; for he says, "He sat down in the usual "Table-Gesture; not lying on one side, for it "was not *easy* to eat, nor *possible* to drink in that "Posture, but sitting upright, tho' perhaps, sit-"ting low:" Or rather, as Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us, the Posture was, sitting on a Couch, leaning the left Elbow on the Table.

My Account of the Constitution of the Church of *England*, of the regal Supremacy, and of the Proceedings of the Convocation in the Affair of Mr. *Whiston*, you call *Misrepresentations* *; but I observe you are so *prudent* as not to offer a single Word in Proof of their being such.

Your representing me as having a *great Zeal for Arianism*, and *being fond of these new Notions* †, for which I had given not the least real Occasion, is an Artifice so low, that you must give me leave to look down with great Pity upon it; not doubting but I have both an Advocate and an Avenger in your own Bosom.

There is something truly extraordinary in your affirming—"That the *damnatory Clauses* of the "*Athanasian* Creed may be as safely subscribed, "without any explanatory Declaration, as the *holy* "*Scriptures*;

* Def. p. 37, 38. † P. 38, 41.

" *Scriptures*; at leaſt ſuch Paſſages, as *He that be-*
" *lieveth not ſhall be damned—He that believeth not*
" *the Son, ſhall not ſee Life, but the Wrath of* GOD
" *abideth on him* *, &c."—As much as to ſay, You may as confidently aſſent to the Deciſions of a weak and fallible *Man*, concerning the *everlaſting State* of Multitudes of his Fellow Men, as to the Deciſion of the omniſcient and infallible GOD.—Or thus, becauſe GOD hath fixed *ſome* Terms for a Man's Entrance into Life, therefore *Man* may take upon him to deviſe and fix *others*.—Or thus, becauſe CHRIST had Authority to pronounce, that no Man who received not *the Goſpel*, which he preached, ſhould finally be ſaved, therefore *Athanaſius* (if he was its Compiler) had Authority to pronounce, that no Man who believed not *the Creed* which he had made, ſhould attain eternal Life, but ſhould *everlaſtingly periſh*.—Are theſe Concluſions juſt?

I cannot think myſelf to need your Forgiveneſs, Sir, for aſking, " whether *you* were amongſt the
" weak and uncharitable Minds, who damn to the
" Pit of Hell, all who cannot receive all the dark
" and myſterious Points ſet forth in the *Athanaſian*
" Creed."—For does not that Creed moſt *peremptorily* pronounce this Damnation on all ſuch? Are not *you* a zealous Advocate and Admirer of that Creed? Do you not *yourſelf* thirteen Times a Year, in the Preſence and Church of GOD, and as his Miniſter and Ambaſſador, declare ſolemnly to the People, *That whoever does not keep* WHOLE *and* UNDEFILED *the Faith therein delivered, he ſhall* WITHOUT DOUBT *periſh everlaſtingly?* Where then is the wrong of my aſking, *Whether you are amongſt the weak and uncharitable Perſons?* &c. For if you are *ſincere* in its Uſe, and do really believe what you ſolemnly tell the People, when you read to them *that*

* Def. p. 40.

that Creed, you must, surely, be content to be reckoned in that Number. For how to reconcile a solemn Declaration that certain Persons, WITHOUT DOUBT *perish everlastingly*, with hopes of their Salvation, is what no Wit of the subtlest *Jesuit* is able to perform.

The Subscriptions of our Ministers, with the Protestation they made against the *damnatory Clauses*, can with no Truth, I apprehend, be called "a *Protestatio contra Factum*, nor a subscribing Assent "to the Truth of certain Propositions, at the same "Time declaring they do not assent to it *." For it really amounted to no more than this—"I believe "the Articles of this Creed, and think it agreeable to the Word of God, but I here publickly "declare, I do not consider the *damnatory Clauses* "as any Part of the Creed, nor give my Assent "to them." As for the Subscription of our present Ministers, if it be not done under a Claim of the Benefit of this Protestation made by their Predecessors, or with some such Protestation made by themselves; I freely own, Sir, I cannot justify it, and think it a Thing which ought not to be done.

SUBSCRIPTION to human Creeds have, I apprehend, been of infinite Disservice and Hurt to the Christian Church, have rent it into a Variety of Sects and angry Parties, and filled it with innumerable Strifes and Debates: They are *a Fence* raised around the Church, which can possibly keep none but *virtuous* and *honest* Persons, but never can one *Hypocrite*, one *Heretick*, or *wicked Man*, from entering into it. I wish the Case you mention may not be extremely common, *viz. Fraudulent and insincere Subscriptions, and the constant Use of Forms, which they who use them do not approve of, whereby the Conscience is defiled* †.

* Def. p. 41. † Ibid. p. 44.

But the Point of Subſcriptions which is the Subject of your *Appendix*, will be conſidered by an *abler Hand*; who will give you, I hope, ample Satisfaction on this Head: To his Inſtructions I commend you, Sir, wiſhing you with great Sincerity, abundant Peace and Truth.

THE

Micaiah Towgood

THE

DISSENTING GENTLEMAN's

THIRD and LAST

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

I HAVE read carefully your *two Defences*, and attentively weighed the Reasons by which you further press my *Conformity* to your Church; but must still say, that though I feel the Attraction of *worldly Interest* strongly operating with your Arguments, and giving them great Force; yet there is something more forcible which draws a contrary way.

Were I to never live but in the present World, I would soon become your Convert: But when I consider that the *Purity*, *Simplicity*, and *Liberty* of the GOSPEL are a *sacred* DEPOSITE committed to my Trust; and that there is an *Allegiance* I owe to CHRIST, as the ONLY Lawgiver of the Church, for which I must surely be accountable before him; I cannot but think it my *Duty*, and therefore, upon the whole, most certainly my *Interest* also, to continue my *Separation*, though attended with some worldly Disadvantage and Reproach.

The Grounds of my *Dissent* I have already layn before the World, to whose impartial Consideration

tion they are humbly ſubmitted. "But I have left "unnotic'd and untouch'd, you complain, a great "Part of your Letters." This, indeed, I have done, and ſhall alſo of your Defence; a great Part of both being futilous, and of little Moment to the Merits of the Cauſe before us. Debates of this kind, I knew, inſenſibly ſwell. I remarked therefore, but upon a *few* of the *many* obnoxious Paſſages with which your Letters abound, that greater Liberty might be left to preſent you with ſeveral ſtrong, and to me unanſwerable, Arguments for Diſſent from your Church, which you had artfully forborn to mention; and which, tho' ſince held up before you and peculiarly urg'd upon you, you turn gravely away from, and will not be provok'd to encounter their Force.

I have preſs'd you with the *Conſtitution* and *Frame* of your Church; and have ſhewn you various Points in which its Structure and Form was not only quite *different from*, but actually *repugnant to*, the Church of JESUS CHRIST; conſequently, that it was not, could not be any *dangerous* and *damnable Schism* for the Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt* to ſeparate and withdraw from it, as you had raſhly affirmed. But to this *popular and great Plea* you have made no Reply at all; it ſtands before you in full Strength.

This Charge of *Schiſm* is ſtill rendered more completely *ridiculous*; by obſerving,——That the very Powers which *alone* form'd, and which *alone* govern your Church, have given us leave to *withdraw* from it. The *very* AUTHORITY which *made* your Church, and upon which *alone* it reſts, hath allow'd us to ſet up our *ſeparate* Churches for Worſhip; and hath taken thoſe Churches, and the Worſhip perform'd in them, under its immediate Protection and Care.

SECT

SECT. I.

Of Church Power, *and in* whom *lodged.*

THE Iſſue of the Debate betwixt the *Church* and the *Diſſenters*, I have frequently reminded you, and every attentive Perſon ſees, depends abſolutely and intirely upon this ſingle Point—— Is there any *other* Lawgiver or King in the *Church of* GOD beſides JESUS CHRIST, or, is there not? Is there *Power* and *Authority* veſted in any Man or Body of Men on Earth, to make and to injoin *new Rites* of Chriſtian Worſhip, and *new Terms* of Chriſtian Fellowſhip, beſides what CHRIST, the *only* Lawgiver, hath *himſelf* made and injoin'd; or, is there not? Could you but be engag'd to give a *plain* and *direct* Anſwer to this one Point, it would ſoon end the Debate. But for Reaſons beſt known to your ſelf, yet very obvious to the World, you are deaf to my repeated Solicitations on this Head; and will not, cannot be either *perſuaded* or *provoked* to ſpeak your Sentiments freely and openly upon it.

You ſtrenuouſly contend that *there is ſuch a* POWER; but are greatly at a loſs, 1. *Where* to place it? And, 2. *How* to limit and confine it? Theſe are *two things* which it indiſpenſibly lies upon you to *fix* clearly and to *aſcertain*; before you can, with any Grace, cenſure our *Separation* as unjuſtifiable and wrong. But tho' in multiplying Words, your Talent is not common, and you expatiate diffuſely upon things of little moment; yet *here* where the Point lies, and you ſaw, and even felt it, you artfully endeavour to evade. However, with much Difficulty, a few Conceſſions are extorted from you, which, in Part, ſhew the World

your

your prepoſterous Scheme, and which prove you to be really (as I ſhall preſently ſhew) no *Advocate* for, no *Friend* at all to the true *Church of England*, the Church eſtabliſhed *by Law*; but to be a *Betrayer*, an *Oppugner* of it, a dangerous *Undermíner* of its very Baſis and Foundation; and that, if your Principles take place, it muſt preſently be overthrown, and its Hierarchy and Frame be utterly deſtroy'd.

For, with regard to the *firſt* of the above Points, *viz.* In WHOM this *Power* of making and enjoining *new* Ceremonies and Rites of Worſhip, and *new* Terms of Communion in the Church of *Chriſt*, is veſted——You affirm, 1. "*That 'tis* NOT *in the* "CIVIL MAGISTRATE; *he has* NO SUCH POWER "*at all* *." But, 2. "*'Tis in the* PASTORS *and* GO-"VERNORS *of the Church* †." Now,

FIRST, If *it be* NOT *in the* CIVIL MAGISTRATE; and HE *has*, as you affirm, NO SUCH POWER *at all*; the Conſequence is inevitable, that then the preſent *eſtabliſhed Church of England* is illegally, unjuſtly, tyranically *eſtabliſhed*: That it is an *Uſurpation* upon the Rights of Chriſtians, and upon the civil Liberties of Mankind; and that the very *Baſis* on which it ſtands, with its whole *Frame* and *Conſtitution*, are fundamentally, eſſentially and notoriouſly *wrong*. For, —— That the preſent *Church* of *England* was conſtituted, form'd and eſtabliſh'd by the *Civil Magiſtrate*, and ONLY by him, *viz* by Q. *Eliz.* and her Parliament, every Gentleman, not a perfect Stranger to our Hiſtory and Conſtitution, indiſputably knows. When we talk of the Church *eſtabliſhed by Law*; by what *Law*, I pray, do we mean eſtabliſhed? Is it not by *a Law* enacted by the *Crown and Parliament*, and enacted by no Authority or Power but *theirs?* Is not

* I. Defence, p. 18, 19. † Ibid. p. 10.

not the *Act of Uniformity* the grand Pillar or Foundation on which the Church of *England* rests? Was it not *that* alone which *established* its present Liturgy, with all its Ceremonies and Forms? But by *whom* was that Law made? was it not by the *Civil Magistrate*; and made by him *alone*; the Bishops in the House of Lords and the Clergy in Convocation labouring earnestly against it.——To say then, as you do, that the *Civil Magistrate has* NO POWER to decree Ceremonies and Forms of Worship, is to say that the *Act of Uniformity* wa sa tyrannical unrighteous Act: that it was enacted by *those* who had NO POWER *at all* to do it; consequently, that the *Church* established by *that Law* was an unwarrantable Establishment, a spurious illegal thing.——This is the destructive Tendency, Sir, of your Principles and Scheme. You root up Foundations, overthrow our Constitution, and demolish totally the very Church you seem zealous to defend; so that you never spoke, perhaps, a truer Word than when you were pleased to describe yourself as *a sorry Advocate for the Church.**

But you ask,——Why are we to regard only the Establishment of Queen *Elizabeth*? "Why is "King *Edward*'s Reformation overlooked †?" Not for

* Defence, p. 128. Your *learned* WARBURTON in his *Alliance &c.* honourably and frankly owns, "*That the Church hath resigned her* INDEPENDENCY, *and made the* MAGISTRATE *her* SUPREME HEAD; *without whose Approbation and Allowance she can direct, order and decree nothing*, p. 87. *And that the Clergy are now under the* MAGISTRATE's *Direction*, p. 74.

Accordingly, an Act in the 2d Parliament of *Charles* II. in *Scotland*, to which all the *Bishops* concurred, and none of the Laity protested against it, enacts,—"*That the Dicipline of the external Government and Polity of the Church is in his* MAJESTY *and his Successors as an* INHERENT RIGHT *of the Crown; and that they may settle, enact and limit such Constitutions, Acts and Orders concerning the Administration of the external Government of the Church and the Persons employ'd in the same, and concerning all ecclesiastical Meetings, and Matters to be propos'd and determined therein, as they in their* ROYAL WISDOM *shall think fit.*"

† II. Defence, p. 140.

for any Advantage which you can poſſibly get by it. For in the *Reformation* under that Prince alſo, " *The Majority of the Biſhops and inferior Clergy* " (directly contrary to what you aſſert) *were on the* " *Side of* POPERY *." And it was the *Parliament* alone, without the *Convocation*, which eſtabliſhed the reform'd Liturgy and Service-Book then.

But at Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reformation, when the preſent Church was form'd, erected and eſtabliſh'd, you alledge, —— " Though the *Biſhops* did, in- " deed, in ſome of her firſt Years oppoſe the Re- " formation, which they had before approv'd, yet " they did not *long ſtand out* ——†". That the Majority of the Biſhops did either *before approve*, or *afterward comply*, is, I believe, quite repugnant to Fact ‡; but whether true or not, is not at all to the Purpoſe: For when the *Reformation* was actually accompliſhed, and the Church with its *Liturgy* and *Forms* was eſtabliſhed; their ſtanding *in* or *out* afterward, for a *longer* or *ſhorter* time, makes nothing for your Point. The Work was done *without them*; this is all I aſk; this you are forced to grant. The *Biſhops* then had *no Hand*, *no Share* at all, in making and eſtabliſhing the preſent Church of *England*; but with all their Might *oppoſed* it. It was done by the *Civil Magiſtrate* (who had NO POWER, you ſay *to do it*) and done by him alone. " At her Majeſty's Acceſſion, and even after Re- " ligion was reſtored to the ſame State as under " King EDWARD, *the* UNIVERSITIES *were ſo en-* " *tirely loſt, that there were ſcarce* TWO *of the ſame* " *Opinion with the Reformers. As to the Biſhops* " *and Clergy* (Biſhop *Cox* adds) *they were* UNANI- " MOUS *for* POPERY, *firm as a Rock.*

—*Stat*

* Neal's Hiſt. Pur. Vol. 1. p. 45, 51. † II. Def. p. 140.

‡ Only *one* Biſhop conformed himſelf to the Queen's Commands, and was continu'd in his Place, *viz. Kitchin* of *Landaff*. Fuller's Ch. Hiſt. Book. ix. p. 59, and Book. vii. p. 414.

——————*Stat Clerus Totus,*
Tanquam dura ſilex aut ſtet Marpeſia Cautes *.

" But if the Reformation was carried on, it was " not, ſay you, *perfected* without the Biſhops †." True, becauſe it was never perfected at all. That glorious Work remains to immortaliſe, perhaps, the Name of its preſent Governors. But to whatever *Perfection* it hath been at all brought ſince its firſt Eſtabliſhment, it was brought *only* and *entirely* by the Authority of the *Crown* and *Parliament*; our excellent Conſtitution acknowledging NO *legiſlative* Power or Authority but *theirs* ‡.

" And as for the XXXIX *Articles*, theſe, you " alledge, were ſome Years after paſs'd in a *Convoca-* " *tion* of the Biſhops and Clergy §." Whether they were paſs'd in a *Convocation* or not, with regard to their *Authority*, is of no Moment at all. *Their* unanimous *Aſſent* adding not the leaſt Grain to their Obligation on the Subject; nor *their* moſt zealous *Diſſent* in the leaſt detracting from it. But did not your Heart ſmite you, Sir, at the very Mention of *theſe* ARTICLES; the XXXIVth of which declares expreſly *againſt* you.——*That your Church Ceremonies were* ORDAINED *by the Authority of the* CIVIL MAGISTRATE. The ſame alſo your XXXth *Ca-*

R *non.*

* Neal's Review, &c. p. 58. Vide alſo Fuller's Ch. Hiſt. Book ix. p. 56. † II. Def. p. 139.

‡ *Synods* and *Convocations* have in all Ages of the Church ſeldom done good; often much Hurt; have generally obſtructed, not promoted *Reformation*; which hath moſtly been carried on by LAY-Councils and Hands The Sentiments of a learned *Father*, who had ſeen much of theſe Church-Proceedings, may be not unworthy to be here remember'd. *Sic ſentio, ſi verum ſcribendum eſt*, &c. *My Opinion is this, if I may be allow'd to ſpeak the Truth; that all* CONVENTIONS *of Biſhops are to be avoided. For I never ſaw any Good come of any* SYNOD; *nor that it did not much more Miſchief, than it hindered. For Truth, in ſuch Aſſemblies, is generally born down by a Spirit of Strife and Vain-Glory.* Greg. Nazian. Epiſt. ad Procop. § Ibid, p. 140.

non *. You have ſeveral times ſubſcribed the Truth of this *Article*, and ſworn to this *Canon*. With what Countenance then durſt you thus publickly *oppugn* and *contradict* it; and in open defiance of our *Articles* and *Statutes*, our *Conſtitutions* and *Canons*, and your own repeated *Subſcriptions*, preſumptuouſly declare,——*That the* CIVIL MAGISTATE *has* NO POWER *nor* AUTHORITY AT ALL *to decree Ceremonies in Religion?* Do you ſolemnly ſubſcribe one thing and publickly teach another! Where is the Conſiſtency and Conſcience of this? But let us ſee where you lodge *this Power*.

SECONDLY. They are the *Church's* PASTORS *and* GOVERNORS, *whom you are pleaſed to inveſt with it* †; that is, I ſuppoſe you mean (for you are extremely ſhy of Explications) *its* BISHOPS *and* CLERGY. But you have not deign'd to ſhew me one *Text* of Scripture, nor one *Statute* or *Act* of Parliament which veſts them with *this Power*. I have ſhewn you ſeveral of *both*, which expreſly diveſt them of it, and utterly deny them any ſuch *Juriſdiction* or *Authority* at all.

But, for once, we will grant you,——*That theſe* PASTORS *and* GOVERNORS *have Authority from* GOD *to make* NEW *Ceremonies and Rites, and to ordain in* CHRIST'*s Church* NEW *Terms of Communion*.—— Tell me then, is this POWER veſted *ſolely* and *only* in the BISHOPS; or, muſt their *Deans* and *Chapters* act in concert with them? Has *every Biſhop*, within his Dioceſe, this *Power* from GOD to injoin new Ceremonies and Rites; or, may his *Archbiſhop* controul him? This latter, I ſuppoſe, not: For *Archbiſhops*,

* "We hold it the Part of every private Man, both *Miniſter* and *other*, reverently to retain the uſe of the Ceremonies preſcribed by *Public Authority*; conſidering, that things of themſelves indifferent do, in ſome ſort, alter their Natures, when they are either commanded or forbidden by a *lawful* MAGISTRATE; and *may not* be omitted, at every Man's Pleaſure, *contrary to the* LAW." Canon xxx. † I. Def. p. 10.

biſhops, you own not to be of *apoſtolic*, but of *modern* Inſtitution; whereas *Biſhops* it ſhould ſeem, are the *lineal* Succeſſors and Repreſentatives of the Apoſtles; in whom therefore the *apoſtolic* Power of governing the Churches reſts. *This* then, which is of *divine*, ought not to be controul'd by *that* which is but of *late* and *human* Inſtitution.——The *Biſhop* then of every Dioceſe, as its *Paſtor* and *Governor*, has Authority from GOD to decree in his Church what Ceremonies and Rites ſoever, and to make what Terms of Communion, he thinks edifying and fit. Nor has any neighbouring Biſhop, no nor any Power upon Earth, Authority to controul him: For as the APOSTLES were all *equal*, ſo muſt their Succeſſors, the BISHOPS, alſo be: And as the former were not *accountable* to any temporal Prince for their Juriſdiction in the Church of CHRIST, the ſame Exemption alſo may their Deſcendants and Repreſentatives claim. How excellent a Scheme of Government and holy Diſcipline this! With what Beauty and Uniformity, Unity and Peace is it calculated to bleſs the Church! as we ſhall preſently ſee. But,

THIRDLY. Acknowledging this *high Power* to be really veſted in the Church's *Biſhops*, as GOVERNORS and PASTORS *of it*. I again aſk, How FAR *does it extend?* Is it *limited* or *unlimited?* May they injoin *whatever* Rites THEY think decent and ornamental; and decree *whatever* Ceremonies or new Terms of Communion THEY judge conducive to the Edification of the Church? As they have now in the Church of *England*, decreed we will ſay, *four* only, to give *additional Beauty and Splendor* to its public Worſhip; may they not, if they think it conducive further to this worthy End, decree *four*, or even *forty*, more? Yes, and make that forty, four Hundred, if they happen to think them *uſeful*, and to promote *Decency* and *Order*, in

the Worſhip of their reſpective Flocks.——But do you not plainly ſee, Sir, how *dangerous* a Power this! A *Power* which, in all Ages, hath proved the *Bane* of the Chriſtian Church! A Flood-gate which hath let in an horrible and filthy Deluge of Animoſities, Corruptions and Superſtitions upon it! Hence ſprung that enormous Maſs of profane and fooliſh Rites, which, to the Scandal of the *Chriſtian* Name, now grievouſly oppreſs both the *Greek* and the *Romiſh* Churches. One good Biſhop, or perhaps Junto of Biſhops, taking it into his Head that there ought to be a *Trine-Immerſion* in Baptiſm; another the *Signation of the Croſs*; another an *Unction with Oyl*; another *Milk and Honey*, *and Impoſition of Hands* immediately after it; another *Inſufflation* or Breathing upon the Perſon's Face to *exorciſe the Devil*; another *waſhing of Hands* before Prayers——thus praying towards the *Eaſt*; Sponſors in Baptiſm; kneeling at the Lord's Supper; firſt the Veneration, then the Adoration of Relics; Images erected, firſt only as Memorials, thence quickly ſliding into Objects of Religious Worſhip: Thus, I ſay, that Inundation of abominable Corruptions, which at preſent overwhelms both the *Greek* and *Romiſh* Churches, gradually came in at this very *Breach* which you are now zealouſly maintaining, namely, the *Biſhops* POWER *to decree Rites and Ceremonies in the Church.*

'Tis a moſt *dangerous* and *important* POWER; not fit to be truſted, and therefore, we may be aſſur'd, never was truſted with any *fallible uninſpir'd* Men. JESUS CHRIST, ſurely the SUPREME *Biſhop* and ONLY *Head* of his Church, well knew what *Inſtitutions* were moſt for its Edification; and what *Ceremonies* and *Rites* would beſt promote the Order and Decency of its Worſhip; and either by himſelf, or by his inſpir'd Apoſtles, has left a *perfect Plan* of both. For any weak and uninſpir'd Men therefore

fore to rise up in after Ages, and fancy they can *improve* the Scheme of Worship which CHRIST hath left; that they can add greatly to its *Beauty*, its *Splendor* and *Perfection* by some Ceremonies of their own, is, to be sure, a rude Invasion of CHRIST's *Throne*, which every sober Christian ought highly to detest.

But with great Acuteness you observe, "That "though those CHURCH-GOVERNORS have Power "to decree *Ceremonies* and *Rites*, yet not *Fopperies* "and *Superstitions*." This is extremely pleasant! But when I ask you, by what Criterion to distinguish *Rites* from *Fopperies*, and *Ceremonies* from *Superstitions*, you will not, and no wonder, satisfy my *Curiosity*. For I defy all the Common Sense and Ingenuity of the Nation (to borrow one of your own Expressions) to shew the *Consecration of Earth* to cover the Body when *dead* to be an edifying and decent Rite; but the *Consecration of Water* to sprinkle it when *living* to be a ridiculous and foolish Foppery. I defy any Man upon Earth to say why *Spittle* and *Salt* in Baptism are not as instructive Ceremonies as the *Sign of the Cross*?——And, why a Bishop has not as much Power, according to ancient Custom, to *exorcise the Devil* before Baptism, as to *lay on Hands* after it (as you say he does in *Confirmation*) to impart the Graces of the *Holy Ghost*.

SUPERSTITION, Sir, is ever restless, insatiable, incroaching; every good Bishop will be ambitious of adding some Rite or Ceremony of his own to *beautify* divine Worship and render it more brilliant. Thus when your holy Bishop *Laud* was Governor of this Church, you had lighted Candles upon its Altars; Copes of Mass Priests with Crucifixes and Images of the Trinity upon them; consecrated Knives to cut the sacramental Bread; Incense Pots; Canisters for Wafers lined with Cambric Lace,——

with

with a deal of other Furniture all *ſolemnly* CONSECRATED for the Service of *Almighty* GOD, and for the Comfort, Inſtruction, and Edification of his Church; to exalt and enliven the *Beauties of Holineſs* therein. And had it not been for the *noble* and *heroic* STAND againſt this *Rite-making* Spirit which the Puritans and their Succeſſors have all along made, there is little Reaſon to doubt, that the Church of *England*, by this time, had fallen little ſhort in theſe *holy Decorations* and *additional Splendors* of the Church of *Moſcow* or of *Rome*.——

I have dwelt the longer upon *this*, becauſe it is, undoubtedly, the *Capital* and *Fundamental* Point on which the Debate betwixt the *Church* and the *Diſſenters* entirely turns. Prove your Church, Sir, to have this *Power* and *Authority* from GOD which ſhe exerciſes and claims, a POWER *to decree new Rites and Ceremonies in Chriſtian Worſhip*, to make *new Terms* of Communion, and to *determine Controverſies of Faith*,——and you need give yourſelf no farther Trouble; all *other things* in Controverſy, Sponſors, Abſolution, the Sacramental Teſt, and every other thing ſhall immediately be given up. Make good but this *one Point*, and if your Church commands us to ſign ourſelves *all over* with a ſignificant and inſtructive *Croſs*, we will reverently do it.——If it bids us worſhip towards the *Eaſt*, and to think the *omnipreſent* DEITY to be more *there* than in the *Weſt*; and to bow at the Name of *Jeſus*; we will humbly ſubmit;——or, if it requires us to believe, that an amorous *Devil* was forced away from his beloved Maid by the Fumes of a Fiſh's Liver; or that the vileſt Wretch that lives, if the King gives him a Poſt, has a *Right* to eat at the *Lord's-Table*; and that when he dies he *reſts in* CHRIST, and is *taken to* GOD *in Mercy*; we will roundly believe it all. There is *nothing* your Church can *injoin* or *decree*, but you ſhall find the Diſſenters dutifully ſubmitting

mitting to it when you have once clearly ſhewn it to have *this* POWER *from* GOD; and have told us plainly, and without Reſerve, *what* you mean by *the* CHURCH; and have diſtinctly pointed out WHO *the Perſons* are in whom this Power reſides.

But it is pitiful and low Trifling, Sir, and indeed conſummately ridiculous——to talk of the "CHURCH'S *Juriſdiction and Authority over* DIS-"SENTERS——*of the Subjection we owe* IT,—— "*of the* DAMNABLENESS *of the Sin of refuſing Obe-*"*dience to* IT——." When you have not, durſt not, cannot openly and plainly tell us WHO and WHAT it is you mean by the *Church?* Or WHO the Perſons are to whom GOD hath committed this high and important Truſt?——Is it the King and Parliament; or, is it not?——Is it the Clergy met in Convocation; or, is it not?——Is it each Biſhop in his reſpective Dioceſe; by himſelf alone, or in Conjunction with his Clergy; or is it not?—— Is it the whole Body of Chriſtian People, the Congregation of the Faithful; or, is it not? Open yourſelf freely, Sir, and don't *be afraid of* TRUTH. TRUTH will never hurt you; it is a moſt innocent and lovely thing; it may rob you of ſome *Emoluments* and *Poſſeſſions* of a worldly nature; but be aſſur'd it will give you SOMETHING more ſubſtantial in their ſtead. Be ingenuous then, and tell Diſſenters——in *whom* GOD hath lodged this POWER to which *they owe Subjection*, and by revolting from which they are guilty of a *dangerous and damnable* Sin. If you write again, but will not explain yourſelf *diſtinctly* on this Point, you yield the Cauſe to us before the World. You make it evident that you write neither for OUR, nor *your own* Conviction; but that you have *ſomething* elſe in view beſides *finding out* TRUTH. That *ſomething*, perhaps, you may *find*; but it will continue with you but *for a Mo-*

a Moment: whereas, if you *find and do the* WILL OF GOD, it will give you a Poſſeſſion that will *endure* FOR EVER.

SECT II.

Of the SACRAMENTAL TEST.

THAT the Law called *The* TEST, is not, as you ſuggeſt, the *innocent Occaſion* only, but the plain, the notorious, the *culpable Cauſe* of thoſe Proſtitutions of the *Holy* SACRAMENT, *which*, you ſay, *you ſee with* CONCERN; what room can there be for any rational Doubt? For does not the very Deſign and Intent of that *Law*, at leaſt as 'tis now apply'd, proſtitute and pervert the *Sacrament* to an Uſe not only *different* from, but directly *repugnant* to, THAT for which it was inſtituted and deſign'd by JESUS CHRIST? The *Chriſtian Law* injoins it as a Mean, and with Intent, to *unite* and *coaleſce* Chriſtians. The *Teſt-law* injoins it as a Mean, and with Intent, to *diſcriminate* and *divide* them. For the *Miniſters* of JESUS CHRIST then to be Advocates for a *Law* which proſtitutes and perverts an *holy* SACRAMENT of his Religion; yea, a Law which makes THEMSELVES the very *Inſtruments* and *Tools* of this ſhameful Proſtitution; is ſuch a Violation of their Character, ſuch a Proſtitution of their ſacred Office, ſuch a betraying the *ſolemn Truſt* committed to them by GOD, for which they muſt give Account to the *Chief Paſtor* at his coming, as cannot but greatly ſhock an attentive Beholder; and as ſhould give, methinks, extremely painful Apprehenſions to themſelves.

"These *Proſtitutions*, you aſſure us, *you do ſee* "*with* CONCERN; but yet cannot be for *the* RE-

"PEAL,

" PEAL, becauſe you think it *inconſiſtent* with the " Preſervation of *the* CHURCH *." What *Church* alas! muſt *that* be which *cannot be preſerved* but by an acknowledg'd Proſtitution and Perverſion of an *holy Sacrament!* Sure, not the *Church of* CHRIST. Let not Chriſtians *do Evil, that good may come*; ſuch carnal and corrupt Policy ever defeats itſelf; and its *Condemnation is juſt* †.

You correct me for ſaying,—That by the Force of this Law Multitudes of needy Perſons are *compell'd to come to the Lord's Table*, and cry,——" GOD " forbid! that the Temptations even of Poverty " and Want ſhould be eſteem'd to have the nature " of Force and Compulſion,——for in that Caſe " they would have *no Guilt at all* upon their Con- " ſciences." So then, you can bring off, I find, the young Adulterer from any Guilt with his *lewd Woman, Prov.* vii. 21. becauſe *with the Flattery of her Lips ſhe* FORCED *him.* I thought I had written to a *Batchelor* of *Divinity*, to a Gentleman who was no Stranger to *Scripture* Language, and who knew what is meant when the *King commands his Servants to* COMPEL *the Gueſts to come in*, Luke xiv. 23. For the like uſe of the Word *compel*, you may pleaſe to conſult *Galat.* ii. 14. vi. 12. See alſo *Luke* xiv. 18, 20. in the Original.

That the *Prieſt* has no Power to *refuſe* the Lord's-Supper to the *vileſt* Perſon that demands it as a Qualification for a Poſt, you care not to admit, and aſk,——" Is there *any Law* which forbids the Cu- " rate to repel him from the *Lord's-Table* ‡?" Yes, by equitable Conſtruction of the Law called the *Teſt*; moſt certainly there is: For the *ſame Law* which requires, under ſevere Penalties, all Perſons in Poſts to *receive* the Lord's-Supper according to the Uſage of the Church of *England*, does, by indiſputable Conſequence, require ſome one to *give* it. If it *muſt* be received by them, it muſt ſurely be given

* II. Def. p. 8. † Rom. iii. 8. ‡ II. Def. p. 3.

to them. To ſuppoſe the *Legiſlature* to have *oblig'd them*, under heavy Pains, to partake of the holy Sacrament; but to have *oblig'd none*, upon their Demand, to adminiſter it to them, is to ſuppoſe it acting a moſt abſurd and unjuſtifiable Part; which is not to be imagin'd. *Who* then is the Perſon to whom, according to Law, a Man that wants the *ſacramental* Qualification is to apply for that Service? Undoubtedly his *Pariſh Prieſt*; who is appointed and paid by Law for the Performance of the ſeveral Offices which the *State* requires of him; of which *this* is plainly one. Whatever Power therefore the Rubric gave the Curate to *repel open* Evil Livers *from the Table of the* Lord before the *Teſt-Act* took place, in Caſes of *Qualification*, it is now unqueſtionably *ſuperſeded*, and the Rubric virtually *repeal'd*. For when a new Law injoins what is repugnant to an old, that old Law is to be conſider'd as ſo far ſet aſide. And as for the "*Damages to* "*which the Prieſt is liable to be condemn'd for re-* "*fuſing the Sacrament*," theſe the Law, 'tis preſum'd, will give according to the *Loſs*, which the Perſon can make appear he hath ſuſtain'd by that Refuſal; which in many Caſes may be great; more than the Prieſt is worth.

"The *Oath of Abjuration* you eſteem quite a Pa- "rallel to the *Sacramental Teſt*; and urge, that if one "ſhould be repealed becauſe it lays Men under vio- "lent Temptations to proſtitute their Conſciences; "ſo alſo ought the other *." No, the Caſes, if duly weighed, will be found to differ widely. An Oath *of Fidelity* to the Government that employs us in Poſts of Influence and Power is a *Security or Pledge* evidently founded in the Reaſon of Things; it has been the Practice immemorial of all civiliz'd Nations; Its Neceſſity, or great Expedience, manifeſtly ariſes from the nature of civil Government; it

* Def. p. 6.

it is therefore reasonably presum'd to be the *Will* and *Institution* of GOD the Author of Civil Government; and was instituted for Purposes of a *political* or *civil* kind. Here is no *Prostitution* then, no *Perversion* of this *sacred* RITE, when the *Oath* is tender'd to a Man at his Entrance upon a Post of Trust; and if a needy *Jacobite* takes it, to the Pollution of his Conscience, *himself* only can be blamed: The *Law* that ordered it is clear. But, can any of this be said concerning the SACRAMENTAL *Test?* Hath THIS been an Instrument for the Support of *Civil Government* in the greatest, most flourishing and wisest Empires of the Earth? Hath GOD, the *Author* of civil Government, given the least Intimation of his intending it such a Guard? Had CHRIST the *Institutor* of this Rite the least *Intention* or *Design* that it should be *thus* used and applied; be made an Engine and Tool of *State*; an Instrument to *discriminate* betwixt Christian and Christian; to lift *some* to Posts of Power in the Kingdoms of this World; and to lay upon *others* (Men equally virtuous) Brands of Odium and Disgrace? Had he not unquestionably a quite CONTRARY Design? You know, Sir, that he had. Does he look then with Pleasure down, think you, upon the Kingdom and Church, where he sees his *Name* and *Institutions* thus openly violated, perverted, profaned; his *Priests* liking *to have it so*; approving, espousing, defending the ABUSE? I own, I cannot think it; and should any Man express a fear that *this* is not the least of those *national* SINS which expose us to *Divine* Displeasure; that it is a public Violation of that RIGHTEOUSNESS and PIETY which alone *can exalt a People*; a Blemish, a Disease which preys upon the Body Politic; and, if it does not threaten its Dissolution, yet greatly impairs its Strength: I confess I could not prove his Fears to be *superstitious* or *weak*. For if the

Church of CORINTH was *severely chastien'd* for not making a due Distinction betwixt the *Sacrament* and their *common Meals*, and not eating it AS *the* LORD's *Supper*; I see not but the Church of ENGLAND may have something also to *fear*, for those *Perversions* and *Prostitutions* which, you own, *you see* with CONCERN; for its using this *Sacrament* not only *not according to*, but directly *against* its primitive Institution; to a *Purpose* and for an *End* which quite *opposes* and *subverts* one principleDesign for which our Divine *Master* appointed this SACRED RITE.

High Offices and Court Employments, I have acknowledg'd, might be apt to corrupt *Dissenters*; as every one knows them to have this Influence upon the human Mind; though as a *Briton* therefore and a *Christian* I wish earnestly to REPEAL, yet as a *Dissenter* I profess no Solicitude about it. "But I ought not then, you say, so *strenuously* to "plead for their being admitted to such Employ-"ments, but to be very solicitous *against* it." Review, Sir, in less haste, and you will find, I am so far from pleading *strenuously* for their Admission to such Employments, that I have not so much as pleaded for it *at all*. All I plead for is, the Removal of the *Incapacity* under which they *unjustly* lie; the breaking a disgraceful Yoke which the *Test* hath put upon their Necks; and the restoring them to their *native* Freedom and Honour and Right. That the *State* may have Liberty, if it thinks it needs their faithful Services, to avail itself of them; and that it be left to their *Liberty*, their *Virtue*, their *Choice* either to accept or refuse Posts of Trust under the Government; and that they may not stand branded and stigmatiz'd before the World as Persons *incapable* and *unworthy* of such Trusts *.

SECT.

* In the late excellent COMMENT on *Warburton*'s Alliance, &c. the Passage of my *second Letter*, to which this refers, is not only

SECT. III.

Of our CONSTITUTION *in Church and State.*

YOU ſeem a little diſpleaſed at my *doubting* " Whether the *Church* were an eſſential and " an half Part of our CONSTITUTION? and whe- " ther *Church* and *State* here in *England* are ſo *in-* " *corporated* and *united* as that, like the *married Pair*, " they muſt ſtand or fall together? and alledge, " that in all the Converſation as well as in the Wri- " tings of *Diſſenters* and others, we read and hear " continually of the *eccleſiaſtical* as diſtinguiſhed " from the *civil Conſtitution:* Yea, even from the " Throne and both Houſes of Parliament we often " hear

only miſtaken, but not faithfully and exactly quoted. In the *Letter* it ſtands thus, p. 74, 75.—" *Though I think* THIS LAW *a moſt un-* " *righteous Reſtraint upon us, and an undoubted Violation of our na-* " *tural Rights; yet I am far from being perſuaded that its* REPEAL " *would be of the leaſt Service to our Intereſt as* DISSENTERS. *I* " *doubt, and have often thought, there is too much Truth in what* " *you ſay*, that high Truſts and Court-Employments would be " extremely apt to corrupt us; *and that it would really rather in-* " *jure than ſtrengthen our Intereſt. I have never therefore as a* " DISSENTER *been at all ſolicitous for the* REPEAL."

Note, This is expreſs'd only as a *Doubt* or *Suſpicion*; but the Author of *that* COMMENT hath made it ſay in poſitive and ſtrong Terms (p. 123) " *That a Repeal of the* TEST *and* CORPORATION *Acts would* REALLY *be injurious to the Intereſt of Proteſtant Diſſenters*; or, *that I am perſuaded it would rather injure than ſtrengthen our Intereſt.*" Which is giving the Paſſage a very different Turn.

And when that Gentleman *aſks*,—" Is there an *abſolute Incapa-* *city* of being virtuous in high Stations? I *Anſwer*, No: But if there be a great *Danger* of being *Vitious*; this will juſtify ſurely an *Indifference*; *a no ſolicitude* about them; and will excuſe, at leaſt, a *Doubt* a *Fear* as to the Event. And when he further aſks,—" Would any Man think his Conduct juſtifiable, ſhould " he *refuſe* a large Eſtate merely becauſe of the greater Danger " of his being corrupted by it?" I *Anſwer*, 1. There have been

Inſtances

" hear of our Conſtitution in *Church and State**." But diveſt yourſelf, for a moment, of *worldly attachments*, which inſenſibly warp the Mind, and you will ſee it, I believe, to be a very *rational Doubt*. For our *eccleſiaſtical*, however commonly diſtinguiſhed by Sounds, I have fully proved in my *firſt Letter* (page 19—29, to which you have not preſumed to make the leaſt Reply) as alſo in the Beginning of this Letter, to be really no other than a *civil* Conſtitution; a *Syſtem* or *Frame* contrived, diſpoſed and enacted by the CIVIL MAGISTRATE; as much as the Conſtitution of the *Treaſury*, of the *Army*, or of the *Courts* of *Weſtminſter-Hall*. Theſe all, Sir, have their *Conſtitutions*, (that is, their ſeveral Parts of the public Buſineſs aſſigned them to diſpatch, and their ſeveral Officers and Forms and Methods of proceeding in them) as really, as truly, and as much as the *Church*. The ARMY is the *Conſtitution* and Order of the *civil* Magiſtrate relating to the Direction of

Inſtances of ſuch *Refuſal* recorded, and, perhaps, juſtly, as Inſtances of heroic Virtue. But, 2. To REFUSE *it when offer'd*, is a thing extremely different from being SOLICITOUS *to obtain it*. Public Offices and Truſts, when *offered* by thoſe in Power, ought not to be *refuſed* by ſuch as think themſelves capable of rightly diſcharging them; becauſe this would be to reject an Opportunity of *Public Service*, to which their Country calls them. But this may be done without a *Solicitude* to procure them.

The Paſſage on which this ingenious Author has ſtep'd aſide to remark, ſpeaks but the very ſame Sentiment which himſelf has elſewhere, perhaps more ſtrongly expreſs'd. *Comment*, &c. page 138. " An *indifference* to the Honours, Riches and Pleaſures of " this World, a Contempt of and Victory over them, is the *Inde-* " *pendency* and *Supremacy* which the true Religion and Church " can boaſt; the Reſignation (or Loſs) of which muſt be infinitely " dangerous to her, her Poiſon, her death Wound."—Again, page 131. " Though it may be thought I am pleading for the In- " troduction of Proteſtant *Diſſenters* into Places of Profit and Truſt, " I am fully perſuaded that their having ſuch Places would not " make them more religious Men, nor from Numbers of them ſo " employed would their Societies appear with greater Reputation " as religious Societies."

* Let. I. page 11. II. Def. pages 9, 10.

of the Military Force. The TREASURY is the *Conſtitution* and Order of the ſame Magiſtrate relating to the Collection and Diſpoſal of the public Monies. The COURTS of *Weſtminſter-hall* are the *Conſtitution* of the ſame Magiſtrate for the diſpenſing public Juſtice. And the CHURCH is the *Conſtitution* and Order of the ſame Magiſtrate relating to the Manner in which the public Worſhip is to be performed. The Officers in *each* are ALL entirely *made*, *inſtructed*, *controuled* by the Power of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE: 'Tis by *his* Authority alone they are all qualified and impowered to act in their reſpective Stations; and 'tis in *that Manner*, and by *thoſe Rules* only which HIS *Wiſdom* hath preſcribed, that in all their reſpective Offices they ſeverally proceed.

What you call then the *eccleſiaſtical* is really, you ſee, no other than a Branch of the *civil* Conſtitution; and what you call the *Church* is in truth no more an *eſſential*, much leſs *an half* Part of our CONSTITUTION, than the *Treaſury*, the *Army*, or either of the *Courts* of *Weſtminſter-hall*. Should, now, the Wiſdom of the *Legiſlature* think proper to new-form any of theſe *Conſtitutions*; for inſtance, the Method of diſpenſing Juſtice in any of our *Law Courts* (which *Courts*, by the way, are all of much longer ſtanding than the Conſtitution of our preſent *Church*) by which a Saving would ariſe of vaſt Sums to the Public, and *Juſtice* be diſpenſed in a more *rational* and *eaſy* way: Would you not ſmile to hear ſome zealous Gentlemen of the Robe ſtand forth and inſiſt,——*That theſe* COURTS *were an eſſential and an half Part of the* CONSTITUTION; *and that therefore whoever moved for, or ſo much as wiſhed, an* ALTERATION *in either of them, could not be ſafely truſted with any ſhare of the public Power, and was really in Truth an Enemy to the* STATE—? The learned Gentlemen of that Robe, Sir, no doubt, alike

ſmile

ſmile to hear you thus reaſoning as to the *Church* *.

By " the CONSTITUTION *in Church and State*, " then, of which we often hear even in Speeches " and Addreſſes from, and to the Throne," can be meant nothing elſe, than,——*that* ORDER *or* FORM *of Government reſpecting* ALL *Perſons and Things which is eſtabliſhed by the Laws and Cuſtoms of this Realm.* A CONSTITUTION, by which the *King* or QUEEN, *as ſupreme Head* of the Church, is the fountain of *all* Power and Juriſdiction therein; authoriſed to inſtruct, over-rule and controul all the *Archbiſhops*, *Biſhops*, and *Prieſts* in this kingdom, in all their moſt SPIRITUAL and ECCLESIASTICAL concerns——A CONSTITUTION, by which a LADY, when ſuch fills the Throne, is impowered to *compoſe*

* That the Account here given of the *Nature* and *Conſtitution* of the Church of *England* is quite agreeable to the Sentiments of our *firſt* REFORMERS, the *Founders* and *Framers* of it, appears from the determination of a ſelect Aſſembly of them, convened at *Windſor* by K. *Edward* VI. by whom (as may be concluded from Archbiſhop *Cranmer*'s Manuſcript) it was declared.

" That all Chriſtian Princes have committed to them immedi-
" ately from GOD the *whole* cure of their Subjects; as well con-
" cerning the adminiſtration of GOD's Word for the *Cure of Souls*,
" as concerning the Miniſtration of things *political* and *civil* Go-
" vernance. In both theſe Miniſtrations they muſt have ſun-
" dry Miniſters under them, to ſupply that which is apppinted to
" their ſeveral Offices.

" The *civil* Miniſters under the King's Majeſty in this Realm be
" thoſe whom it ſhall pleaſe his Highneſs, for the time, to put in
" Authority under him; as for Example, the Lord *Chancellor*, Lord
" *Treaſurer*, Lord *Admiral*, *&c.*

" The Miniſters of GOD's *Word* under his Majeſty be the *Bi-*
" *ſhops*, *Parſons*, *Vicars*, and ſuch other *Prieſts* as be appointed
" by his Highneſs to that Miniſtration; as for Example, the Bi-
" ſhop of *Canterbury*, the Biſhop of *Wincheſter*, the Parſon of
" *Coynwick*, *&c.*

" All the ſaid Officers and Miniſters, as well of the one ſort as
" of the other, be appointed, aſſigned and elected in every Place
" by the Laws and Orders of Kings and Princes." [Vide *an Extract from Archbiſhop* Cranmer's *M.S. Stilling. Iren. Part* II. *Ch.* viii. page 391.

poſe public Prayers for the Church; to ſtop all Preaching therein; to fill vacant Biſhoprics with what Perſons ſhe pleaſes, or not to fill them at all *; to direct all *Eccleſiaſtics* what they *ſhall*, or *ſhall not* preach; and even in the moſt *abſtruſe* and *metaphyſical* Points to be the *final* Judge of HERESIE; whoſe Judgment muſt ſtand, as to what ſhall or ſhall not be deemed HERESIE in this Church, even though it happen to *contradict* that of all her *learned* CLERGY in Convocation convened.

Thus that renown'd LADY Queen *Elizabeth*, in the Fulneſs of her *eccleſiaſtical* Power, HERSELF compos'd *a Prayer*, Archdeacon *Echard* † informs us, for the uſe of a great Number of her *Nobility* and *Gentry*, as well as her Soldiers and Sailors, in the Expedition againſt *Cadiz*, directing it to be *uſed daily in every Ship*. And by virtue of her *Supremacy* ſhe might, I preſume, if ſhe had pleas'd (and that any *future* QUEEN may) compoſe Prayers for the uſe of the *Archbiſhops*, *Biſhops*, and all the *Clergy* of the Land; and injoin their ſolemn Uſe every *Sunday* in the Church; and that the Uſe of ſuch devout FEMININE Compoſitions, no *Biſhop* nor *Prieſt* can agreeably to our CONSTITUTION, in any wiſe refuſe.

The ſame *Royal* LADY, by virtue of her Proclamation only, put an entire ſtop to all Preaching of Miniſters and others throughout the Kingdom; and the People were charged *to hear no other Preaching or Doctrine, but the Epiſtle and Goſpel of the Day, and the Ten Commandments, without any Expoſition or Paraphraſe thereon.* And ſhould any *future* QUEEN

T think

* Any of the Biſhoprics may be kept *vacant* by the Princes of *England*, as thoſe of *Ely* and *Oxford* were by Q. *Elizabeth*; the latter had no Biſhop for 22 Years. The Parliament diſſolved the rich Biſhopric of *Durham* in King *Edward* VI's Reign, and gave the Profits to the Crown. And it had remained diſſolved to this Day, probably, had not Popiſh Q. *Mary* reſtored it.

† Hiſt. of England, p, 367. Col. 1.

think proper to do the ſame, I humbly apprehend, all her Biſhops and Clergy are, by our CONSTITUTION *in Church and State*, oblig'd to obey.

By the ſame *Conſtitution* King *Charles* I. put forth a Proclamation (if a WOMAN had worn the Crown, *ſhe* alſo might have done it; as any *future* QUEEN may) commanding the *Clergy* not to preach or diſpute about *Arminianiſm*. The learn'd Biſhop *Davenant*, preſuming to preach upon the Doctrine of *Predeſtination*, was forced to appear upon his Knees before the *Council*; and being ſeverely reprimanded, hardly ſo eſcaped: Though he alledg'd he had preach'd nothing but the XVIIth *Article* of the Church of *England*. The KING, not only in his *ſuperior*, but SUPREME eccleſiaſtic, Wiſdom told him,——"*The Doctrine of* Predeſtination *was too* "*big for the Peoples Underſtandings*; *and that* HE "WAS RESOLVED *not to permit that Controverſy to* "*be diſcuſs'd in the Pulpit* *."

What Authority our *Conſtitution* gives QUEENS to judge in Points of HERESIE (the moſt *deep* and *myſterious* Points) and to controul the Proceedings of the moſt venerable and holy *Synod* which the Clergy of this Kingdom can poſſibly compoſe, has been obſerv'd in the Caſe of *Whiſton*, whom Queen ANNE, by her *ſole* Authority, ſkreen'd from the heavy Cenſure of her learn'd *Convocation*. HER ſingle Judgment, in the Balance of our apoſtolic and excellently conſtituted Church, being of far *greater Weight* than that of the united Biſhops and Clergy of the whole Land. This you are pleaſed, weakly enough, to call *Miſrepreſentation*; but might have ſeen the Truth of it atteſted by two of your own learn'd and reverend Hiſtorians *Burnet* and *Tindal*, in their Accounts of the Year 1711.

Again,

* *Vide* Fuller's Church Hiſt. Book IX. page 138

The ſame bleſſed *Martyr*, by his royal mandate only, without any trial, ſequeſtered and ſuſpended from the execution of his office good Archbiſhop *Abbot*, for refuſing his licence and approbation to a moſt vile and ſcandalous ſermon of *Sibthorp*.

Again, by our preſent *Conſtitution* the King alone, or at leaſt by Conſent of Parliament, hath undoubted POWER to divide the *twenty-ſix* Biſhoprics, into which this Kingdom is at preſent cantoned, into as many *hundred*; and thus to render them more like the Biſhoprics of the *firſt ages*; when every Chriſtian Biſhop took the *overſight* of no more than he could *perſonally* know, and than could communicate at *one Table*; a POWER to new-frame the whole order of public worſhip; to aboliſh its preſent articles, ceremonies and forms; and to ſubſtitute none at all, or quite new ones, in their ſtead. A POWER to diſpoſe of that part of the public treaſure by which the *Clergy* are maintained in a more *equitable* and *juſter* manner; and to reduce the ſhameful Exorbitance, by which ſome Members of that great, and in itſelf venerable and uſeful Body, wanton in vaſt Affluence, Indolence and Sloth, (which may be what you call *Snugneſs*) whilſt others more virtuous, laborious and learned wear away their Lives in Obſcurity and Want.—This, Sir, without queſtion, is our preſent CONSTITUTION *in Church and State.*

SECT. IV.

Of SPONSORS *in Baptiſm.*

YOUR Defence of *Sponſors in Baptiſm* comes next to be conſidered. Here you affirm,—"That I repreſent the Uſe of Sponſors as a very "*myſterious* Point, as an *unaccountable*, *inexplicable*, "*abſurd* and *unlawful* thing*." An Aſſertion hurried from you by the Ardor of Zeal, but quite without *Truth*. The Uſe of *Sponſors*, in all Caſes of Parents *Incapacity*, I entirely approve; and expreſly told

* II. .Def page 24.

told you, *That in such Cases the Dissenters also use them* *. You could not, without extreme *Inattention*, but see, that it was "*The* SETTING ASIDE *the Parents*; *the* FORBIDDING *them to stand forth and engage solemnly for the religious Education of the Child*; *and the receiving the Child to Baptism upon account of its* OWN FAITH *and its* OWN PROMISE *expressed by its* SURETIES," that I thus represent. And though I have the Pleasure now to find you tacitly giving up, though not honourably retracting, that precipitant Expression, "That Godfathers are not an *useful* only, but even a NECESSARY *Institution*," yet scarcely, without Pain, can one see you grievously embarrassed in accounting for the *Answers* made at the *Font*. These, you still insist, are not the *Sureties*, but the CHILD's Answers. But your Attempts to explain, how a Child who *cannot* believe, does yet *profess Faith*!—— How the Infant who in *no Sense* can promise or engage; does yet *really* and in *good Sense* vow and engage!—— How *the Babe*, who has no Thought, no Purposes, nor Desires, may yet express these *by the Mouth* of its Sureties; and these Expressions of what it *hath not*, and cannot possibly have, are accepted by the Church as a proper Token that it *hath* them, and as a solid Ground of Baptism!—— This is still to me, and I believe to all the World, as inexplicable, mysterious, transcendent a thing as before you undertook to unvail and explain it.

Nay, the *Mystery* grows upon you, by attempting to unfold it; For you declare, "That the "*Ground* and *Foundation* of Infants being received "to Baptism, in your Church, is the Promise of "GOD to *Believers and their Seed* †." Mind then, 'tis the *Faith of the* PARENT that intitles the *Child* to Baptism; but if the *Ground* of its being received to this Christian Sacrament be the *Faith of its* PARENT

* Let. II. page 42. † II. Defence, page 28.

RENT only, why do you receive it as if upon account of ITS OWN *Faith?* Why interrogate the poor BABE?—— *Doſt* THOU *believe? Wilt* THOU *be baptiſed?* —— Again, if the PARENT's *Faith* be *that* which intitles the Child to Baptiſm; why is not *the* PARENT the Perſon who ſtands forth to *profeſs Faith* as a Qualification for the Baptiſm of the Child? Why is the CHILD called upon *vicariouſly* to declare, that *itſelf* believes, that *itſelf* deſires Baptiſm, *&c.* when all the World ſees that it neither *knows*, nor *does*, nor can in any ſenſe at all *do* either of theſe things?

You endeavour to explain the Matter "by an "Infant in the Lord of the Manor's Court, who by "his Attorney is admitted to his Copy-hold, and "covenants to do Homage for the ſame; or, by "an Infant-King, who hath ſome one of the No-"bility who in his Name and for his Benefit is ap-"pointed to take the Coronation Oath; and there-"by oblige him to obſerve the Laws and protect "his Subjects*. But theſe Inſtances avail you nothing, For,

1. The Child, when admitted by his Attorney in the Lord's Court to his Copy-hold, *does not covenant* to do Homage for the ſame. That he *does not covenant*, I prove by a very plain and inconteſtable Argument, which is, that he *cannot*. There is no Senſe at all, no *religious* or *moral* Senſe, in which the Infant can with any Truth or Propriety be ſaid to *covenant*. No, 'tis the *Attorney*, and he *alone* that covenants to perform the Homage. And in the Caſe of a Minor King, when one of the Nobility takes the Coronation-Oath in his Name or Stead (if any ſuch Ceremony be ever performed) he does not, cannot in any Senſe *thereby oblige the Royal Infant to obſerve the Laws and protect the Subject:* Not whilſt an *Infant*; becauſe, not being a *moral* Agent, he cannot

* II. Def. p. 129.

cannot poſſibly be capable of *moral* Obligation: And not when he comes of Age; becauſe the *Promiſe* or *Oath* of one rational moral Agent, can never properly *oblige* another, if that other was not at all conſcious of, nor gave his Conſent to it. The whole Nature and Extent of the *Obligation* in that Caſe is unqueſtionably this: The Nobleman who takes the Oath, as perſonating the King, and who during the Minority is veſted with the regal Power, ſwears that *he* HIMSELF will, in the Exerciſe of that Power, obſerve the Laws and protect the Subjects. The Obligation of this Oath, which is made by *himſelf* only, can extend only to *himſelf*; and it laſts only ſo long as he continues veſted with the regal Power. But when the *Royal Infant* comes of Age, and aſſumes the Power into his own Hands; he muſt *perſonally* take the Oath; or ſome way or other *ſignify* his ſolemn Aſſent to it, in order to his being laid under any *real Obligation* by it. And then,

2. Theſe Caſes alſo widely differ from that of the *baptized Infant*, becauſe in both of them there are ſeveral important *Services* and *Actions* to be done, (which *muſt be* performed by ſome one) whilſt the *Minority* continues. In the *firſt*, there are Suits and Services in the Lord's Court, and Quit-rents to be paid. In the other, there are *Acts* of regal Power to be continually exerted for the due Government of the People, even whilſt the *Infancy* remains. Theſe, therefore, being indiſpenſibly *Neceſſary* to be done, and the *Infant* being utterly incapable of doing them, hence ariſes a Neceſſity of ſome Perſon's undertaking to Diſcharge theſe Offices for him, and to act in the Infant's ſtead. But, is there any Thing like this in the Caſe of *baptized Infants?* Is there any *Service* or *Homage*, any *Faith* or *Vows* which GOD expects from them whilſt their *Infancy laſts?* You know there is not. If GOD then expects no ſuch Services from the *Infant*, why are *Sponſors* called forth to pretend to *perform* them for him!

And

And this when the pretence is in every View ridiculous; becauſe in Things of Religion 'tis utterly abſurd for one Man to pretend to *promiſe*, to *repent*, to *believe* in the Name of another.

One principal *Deſign* of the Baptiſm of a Child, you own, "*is that ſome* SECURITY *be given*; *ſome* "*ſolemn* STIPULATION *be made before the Church* "*for its* RELIGIOUS EDUCATION." *Who* then, I pray, ſo proper to give this Security, as *the Perſon* to whom its *Education* is committed? *Whom* ſhould the Church bring under the Engagement of a ſolemn *Vow* or *Covenant* for this purpoſe? *Strangers*, who, perhaps, never ſaw the Child; or, who when the Ceremony is paſt, will never ſee it more! Or *the Parents*, in whoſe Family it is to grow up, and under whoſe Eye it is to be formed!

An *explicit* STIPULATION, in your Baptiſm of an Infant, you do not pretend there is any but what the Child (poor Babe) ITSELF *makes*; "but the "Sureties by ſtanding there, and receiving a ſo- "lemn Charge concerning the religious Educa- "tion of the Child are juſtly ſuppoſed to accept "it*." But do you not know, Sir, that this is no *Stipulation*, neither explicit nor implicit. A Stipulation is a *mutual* Promiſe: But though the Sponſors ſtand there, and *hear* the Admonition; no Anſwer, no Word, no Token is required of them by which to ſignify their ſolemn Purpoſe and Engagement to obey it. Accordingly, when they return home, they too generally with great Levity *ſhake off the Charge again, and throw it over to the Parent*†. And thus the ſolemnity of the Inſtitution dwindles into a mere Trifling, if not ludicrous Ceremony; and your boaſted *double Security* ſtill remains no *real Security* at all.

Dr. *Nichols*'s Account of this apparently abſurd and myſterious Affair, to which I referred you, is to be

* II. Def. p. 36. † Com. to the Temp. p. 612.

be ſure far more defenſible, though quite contrary to yours, *viz.* " Baptiſatorum fidem religioſè in ſe " recipiebant, eos ſincerè omnia in Evangelio reve- " lata credere, & ſubſequentes vitæ actiones juxta " Chriſti normam directuros eſſe *."——*That the Sureties religiouſly* ENGAGED *for the Faith of the Baptiſed, that they* SHOULD *ſincerely believe all that was revealed in the Goſpel, and direct the ſubſequent Actions of their Lives by the Law of Chriſt.* This you call MY *Tranſlation*; and tax me before the World " *for having* WRONG TRANSLATED *it to ſerve my* " *Purpoſe*†." It will give you, ſurely, ſome Confuſion and Pain to be told that *this* is not *mine*, but is the *Doctor*'s OWN *Tranſlation*, or that of his learned Friend who publiſhed his *Defence*, *&c.* And I appeal to the Public, whether the *Doctor*'s or *Yours* be the proper Rendering of the Words. Is *Recipere in ſe fidem baptiſatorum,——To make a ſolemn Declaration and Profeſſion touching the Faith of the Baptiſed?*—— Beſides, the *Doctor* was too wiſe a Perſon to repreſent the *Sureties*, as you would have him, as *making a ſolemn Declaration that the Infant* DID *ſincerely believe all that is revealed in the Goſpel,*——becauſe this he well knew was what no *wiſe* or *honeſt* Man could poſſibly declare concerning any Infant upon Earth. He knew it *abſurd to* affirm,——*That the Infant* DID BELIEVE *at all*; much more to affirm *that it* SINCERELY *believed*; but more even yet, *that it ſincerely believed* ALL *that is revealed in the Goſpel.*——Which ever way you view it then, 'tis all myſterious and recondite: And this Buſineſs of the *Sureties* and their *Anſwers at the Font*, after all your Pains to clear it up, is ſtill covered with extremely dark and impenetrable Clouds, which, till ſome new Light ſhall ariſe, one may venture to propheſy will never be diſpelled: It turns the Ceremony of your Baptiſm into little elſe than a ſolemn Trifle; and furniſhes to *Unbelievers* Matter of everlaſting Ridicule and Contempt.

SECT.

* Nich. Def. Part. II. p 273. † II Def. p. 26.

SECT V.

Of CONFIRMATION.

AS to the Ceremony of *Confirmation*, you are ſtill ſo wiſe as not to aſſert any *Scriptural* or *Apoſtolic* Authority for its Practice. But yet aſk,—"If both the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* Gifts of the "Spirit were communicated by the Apoſtles by "*Impoſition of Hands*, why may we not expect that "the *ordinary* ones will be ſtill communicated by "the ſame Adminiſtration? And why ſhould we "not continue that Adminiſtration in the Church "in Hope and Expectation of them *? By theſe *ordinary Gifts*, as you fully explain yourſelf, you mean, what are uſually called, the GRACES *of the Spirit*, even the *Spirit of* LOVE *and of a* SOUND MIND. For you add, "If this *Spirit of Love* and "*of a ſound Mind* was given to *Timothy* by "impoſition of Hands in his *Ordination*; why "may it not be done by the ſame Ceremony "in *Confirmation?*" I am ſorry there is a Proteſtant Divine in this Kingdom capable of aſking ſuch a Queſtion as this. For, 1. This *Spirit of* LOVE *and of a ſound* MIND ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ, which you encourage us to expect from the laying on of the *Biſhop*'s Hands, is one of the ſublimeſt GIFTS conferred upon the human Race by the Goſpel of CHRIST. A GIFT which far excells an *Ability* to ſpeak with Tongues, a *Faith* that can remove Mountains, a *Power* to caſt out Devils, to heal all manner of Diſeaſes, or even to raiſe the Dead.——The *Spirit of* LOVE *and of a* SOUND MIND far excells them all; and yet *this* it ſeems we may now expect by the *laying on* of the Biſhop's Hands! Bleſſed *Epiſcopacy* indeed, if it carries with it *ſuch Gifts!*

U But

* II. Def. p. 38.

But how fooliſh and wild the Claim, if neither *Scripture* nor *Reaſon* lend it the leaſt Support! For,

2. Becauſe *this* GIFT was conferr'd on *Timothy* at his *Ordination* by the laying on of the APOSTLES *Hands*; does it follow, that the *ſame Gifts* may be expected in *Confirmation* from the Hands of our preſent *Biſhops?* Is there Power in their Lordſhip's Fingers to convey ſo divine a *Bleſſing* to the Head on which they reſt? You ſhould know, Sir, that the learned Prelates of this Church *abhor* the preſumptuous Claim: They pretend to no ſuch Power. Why then will you *officiouſly* preſume to claim it for them? And why amuſe the World, and give *Infidels* room to ſcoff by the uſe of a ſolemn *Ceremony* for the conferring theſe *Gifts*, which no mortal Man hath now Power to beſtow? The Age is critical and diſcerning. For the Honour of the Chriſtian *Name* therefore, and the Dignity of Chriſtian *Biſhops*, all Claims not clearly founded on Scripture or Reaſon, and all Offices and Rites not evidently ſupported by them, ſhould at the leaſt be ſilently dropt.

The only *Rite*, after *Baptiſm*, which I find either *inſtituted* or *practiſed* by CHRIST and his *Apoſtles*, "to make a public *Recognition* of baptiſmal "Engagements in the Face of a Chriſtian Congre-"gation," is the celebrating the *Lord's Supper*. By *this* Chriſtians are openly to profeſs themſelves the Subjects and Followers of JESUS CHRIST; to recognize their baptiſmal Covenant; to *ſhew forth that Death* by which he purchas'd them to himſelf; and in the moſt public and ſolemn manner to lay themſelves under freſh and moſt ſacred Obligations to live obedient to his Laws.——Here then are *all* the Ends which can rationally be propos'd in the uſe of *Confirmation*, a human Invention, more effectually and better anſwer'd in that of the *Lord's Supper*, an undoubted Inſtitution and Command of JESUS CHRIST. With the *Emblems* of their Saviour's

viour's *Body and Blood* in their Hands, the *Recognition* they HERE make of their Engagements to an holy Life is vaſtly more ſolemn, the Motives to Obedience more powerful and conſtraining, and they are CERTIFIED *of* GOD's *Favour and gracious Goodneſs to them* by a TOKEN incomparably more important than the laying on of the *Biſhop's Hands*.— If you aſk, "What is this to thoſe who dare not "offer themſelves to the Sacrament * ?" I anſwer, ſuch have equal reaſon not to offer themſelves to *Confirmation*; the ſame *Faith* and *Sincerity* which are requiſite to render a Perſon a proper Subject of the one, make him alſo a worthy Communicant in the other.

That this Ceremony of *Confirmation* is no Part of genuine and primitive CHRISTIANITY, there are few, I ſuppoſe none, of our learned Biſhops and Divines, but perfectly know. *Tertullian* is the moſt antient Author in which Mention of it is found. But by *his* time, 'tis well known, a great Variety of *Superſtitions* and ridiculous and fooliſh Rites were brought into the Church. And you are alſo, I preſume, not ignorant that *Confirmation* was then always performed (not as it is with us, but) IMMEDIATELY *after Baptiſm*, as it is now alſo throughout the *Greek* Church, and all the Churches of the *Eaſt*. A due Regard to this will lead you to the true Meaning of that Expreſſion in your office, which you are ſo embarraſs'd in clearing up; where the Biſhop declares to GOD, *That he hath vouchſafed to regenerate theſe his Servants by Water and the Holy Ghoſt, and to give them the Forgiveneſs of all their Sins*. An Expreſſion taken, probably, from ſome *antient* Liturgy; and which was ſuitable and well adapted to the Practice of thoſe Times, but is utterly *incongruous* and *unſuitable* to ours.

For then, as Dr. *Cave* obſerves †, "Though In-"fants were undoubtedly taken into the Church by

* II. Def. p. 39. † Prim. Chriſ. Part I. p. 194, 208.

" Baptiſm, yet the main Body of the Baptiſed were " *adult* Perſons; who, flocking over daily in great " Numbers to the Faith of *Chriſt*, were received in " at this Door. Uſually they were for ſome con- " ſiderable time *catechiſed*, and trained up in the " Principles of the *Chriſtian* Faith; till having " given Teſtimony of their Proficiency in Know- " ledge, and of a ſober and regular Converſation, " they became Candidates for *Baptiſm*:" Or as a greater Author * ſays, " The *Catechumens* enjoy'd " not the Privileges of the *Faithful* till they had, " in a Senſe, merited them; which was when, thro' " a conſiderable time of Trial, they had evidenced " the Sincerity of their Hearts by the Sanctity and " Purity of their Lives: And then, as *Origen* ſays, " *We initiate them in our Myſteries, when they have* " *made a Proficiency in Holineſs, and according to the* " *utmoſt of their Power have reformed their Conver-* " *ſation.* When they had changed their Manners " and rectified their irregular Carriage, then they " were waſhed with the *Water of Baptiſm, and* NOT " BEFORE. For, as *Tertullian* obſerves, we are not " baptiſed, *that we may ceaſe to ſin*; but *becauſe we* " *have* ALREADY *ceaſed.*" Now when this was the Caſe, and *immediately* after Baptiſm *Confirmation* was adminiſtred, there was ſome Decency and Propriety in the Biſhop's or Preſbyter's (for *Preſbyters* alſo then confirm'd) addreſſing *Almighty* GOD as having *vouchſafed to regenerate theſe his Servants with Water and the Holy Ghoſt, and to grant them the Forgiveneſs of all their Sins.* But how different, alas! (vaſtly different) the Caſe at preſent is with the Multitudes who flock to our modern Confirmations! How *rude* and *unſerious* they ruſh to receive this *epiſcopal* Grace! In how perfunctory and ſlight a manner the Ceremony is performed. What Riot and Diſorder frequently concludes the Day!——is too obvious to the

* Inquiry into the Conſtitution, &c. Part I. p. 102.

the World, and would seem, perhaps, *invidious* if set in its proper Light.

Your laboured Apology for the *Bishop*'s making that very *weighty* and *solemn Declaration* over a *promiscuous* Assembly, which is supposed to include many vitious and corrupt Persons, is effectually overthrown by your own just *Concession*,——" that " if he was, indeed, to declare to each individual " Person, *by himself*, that GOD had regenerated " him in particular with the *Holy Ghost* and for- " given him all his Sins, it would be a different " Case.——Such a Person might be tempted *there-* " *by* to entertain *better* Thoughts of the State of his " Soul than he had Reason for, and to *delude* himself " with *deceitful Hopes* *." Behold this, in effect, indisputably done! For *each* individual Person, after having heard this solemn Declaration pronounced over *himself* in common with all the rest, is presented separately by his Parish Priest; and kneeling before the Bishop, feels his *consecrating Hand* resting upon *his Head*, and hears HIMSELF distinctly and personally *certified* (ASSURED from the *Bishop*'s Mouth) that THIS is a TOKEN *of* GOD's *Favour and gracious Goodness to him* in particular. What now, I ask, is the obvious, the *natural* Construction which the Person puts upon all this! Why surely, unless he thinks the whole Solemnity a Farce; and that the *Bishop* and *Priest* (his spiritual Guides, whose *Lips are to preserve Knowledge*, and who are to be the *Mouth of* GOD to him) have conspired to put a dangerous Cheat upon *his Soul*, he must strongly conclude *his Soul* to be in a happy and safe Case; in a State of *Favour with God*; and a Partaker of that *Forgiveness* which his *gracious Goodness* hath promised in the Gospel of *Christ*.——Whether the Continuance of *this Ceremony*, in its present Form of Administration, be either for the Honour of the *Administrator*, or for the Benefit of the *Church*?—— Whe-

* II. Def. p. 43.

Whether it hath not an apparent Tendency to cheriſh a *deluſive Hope*, and to ſpeak Peace to *ſuch Perſons* as are not, by the *Chriſtian* Covenant, entitled to *Peace?* I with all Humility leave to the Conſideration of thoſe whom, I thank GOD, it more immediately concerns than myſelf; who are to be *faithful in* GOD's *Houſe*; and to *watch for Mens Souls* as thoſe *who muſt give Account to the* GREAT SHEPHERD, who will ſhortly come; before whom it will be a *tremendous thing* to have the immortal Souls of THOUSANDS required at their Hands.

SECT. VI.

The Terms of MINISTERIAL *Conformity hard and terrible.*—LAY-DISSENT *juſtified.*—*The* RISE *of the Separation.*

NEXT after CONFIRMATION, I conſidered *two* other Offices of your *Liturgy*, *viz.* ABSOLUTION *of the Sick*, *and the* BURIAL *of the Dead*; and ſhewed them, I apprehend, to be liable to great Exceptions; and to have no friendly Aſpect upon the *Morals* and *Souls* of Men. I am ſtrengthened in that Opinion by obſerving, that amidſt the Variety of *trifling* things to which you have deſcended, in the Proſecution of this Debate, you have quite overlook'd theſe *two* important Points; and have not ſo much as *undertaken* their Defence. It does ſome Honour to your Underſtanding not to *attempt* to defend what you know to be *indefenſible*, but to let *the Forms* lie under the Imputations charged upon them, till GOD ſhall put it into the *Hearts* of thoſe who have it in their *Power* to wipe theſe unhappy *Blemiſhes* from the Face of the Church.

But as to *theſe*, and ſome other of your *additional Splendors* (doing reverence towards *the Eaſt*, and bowing to the *Name of* JESUS, which alſo you do not ſo much as pretend either to *juſtify* or *explain*) you obſerve, —— "That theſe are things with

" which

" which, as a *Layman*, I have no concern. As to " the Form of *Abſolution*, what has he, for GOD's " Sake, to do with it? If he does not deſign to " take *Orders* in the Church, and ſo ſubſcribe to " the Uſe of the *Liturgy*, 'tis no Concern of *his* " whether that Form be defenſible or not *." But have not I, dear Sir, as much to do with YOUR *Miniſterial Conformity*, as you with MY *Lay-Diſſent?* Are YOU not as much obliged to *vindicate*, before the World, *your* SUBSCRIPTION and USE of theſe Offices in your Church; as I am to juſtify *my* SEPARATION from it? Yes, and I now publickly call upon you, and charge it upon your moſt ſerious deliberate Reflections, as you will ſoon anſwer it at a *ſupreme* and *impartial* Tribunal, to remember and conſider—

That you have *ſolemnly*, and in GOD's *Preſence* (GOD that *ſearcheth the Heart*, and that abhors all *Prevarication*, *Hypocriſy*, and *Deceit*, eſpecially in religious things) in the *Preſence of this* GOD, I ſay, and in the Face of *his Church*, you have declared your UNFEIGNED *Aſſent and Conſent to* ALL *and* EVERY THING *contained in, and preſcribed by the Book of Common Prayer, &c.* If then there be any ONE *Thing* contained in that Book, any ONE *Office* or *Form*, irrational, unfit, repugnant to the Goſpel Scheme, and which no well inſtructed Chriſtian can *heartily aſſent to*, or *unfeignedly approve*. I appeal to your own Conſcience, I appeal to the whole World——Where is the *Honour*! Where the *Chriſtian Simplicity* and *Godly Sincerity* of this ſolemn Declaration! What,——ſhall a Man, a Miniſter, in GOD's *Preſence*, and appealing to HIM as the *Searcher of Hearts*, declare his UNFEIGNED ASSENT to things he does *not approve*; and promiſe his UNFEIGNED CONSENT to uſe Forms in GOD's *Worſhip*, which he *heartily diſlikes!* This is a moſt grievous Yoke; beheld by *Unbelievers*, upon the Necks

* II. Def. p. 133.

Necks of *Chriſtian* Miniſters, with mighty Inſults and Scoffs; and which every Friend to the *Chriſtian* Name ſhould wiſh heartily to ſee removed. And,

This, as before obſerved, *juſtifies* moſt fully that SEPARATION from your Church, to which our *Fathers* were compelled, and which *we* at preſent continue: when in a moſt unrighteous and ſchiſmatical manner *ſhe* caſt out above *two thouſand* of her Miniſters, for not ſubſcribing and declaring *this* UNFEIGNED *Aſſent and Conſent*. Theſe *Miniſters* were by this *deprived* of what they had not *forfeited*; deprived of acting *as Miniſters* by thoſe who had no Right, nor Authority, to deprive them of it. The *Paſtoral Relation* therefore undoubtedly remained betwixt them and their reſpective Flocks; and they acted a lawful, a worthy Part in *continuing* their *miniſterial* Services, though thus cruelly caſt out.

" No, you reply, they ought to have conformed " as *Lay-Men*, as ſome of them did; much leſs " will this juſtify the *Laity* of thoſe Times; leſs " ſtill the Miniſters and Laity of the *preſent* in their " Separation *." To their immortal Praiſe be it recorded, they better underſtood their *Rights* and their *Duty* as CHRIST's *Subjects*, the ONLY KING in the Church; and, with great *Suffering* and worldly *Loſs*, entered boldly their Proteſt againſt this preſumptuous Invaſion of *his Throne*; this ſchiſmatical Intruſion of NEW TERMS of the Chriſtian *Miniſtry* and *Communion* into his Church. The *Conditions* of exerciſing the Chriſtian Miniſtry, which the *Act of Uniformity* impoſed upon our Fathers, were ſuch as no Power upon Earth had a *Right* to impoſe upon them: They were ſuch, as if complied with, opened a wide way for innumerable Corruptions, Superſtitions and Perſecutions to enter and lay waſte the Church. Their Subſcription was required to NEW *Arti-*

* II. Def. page 131.

Articles of Faith which CHRIST had never made; and their unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent to NEW *Rites* and *Forms* of Worſhip which neither CHRIST nor his *Apoſtles* had ever appointed or enjoined: Yea, it obliged them ſchiſmatically to *confine* Chriſtian Communion to thoſe only who would ſubmit to theſe *Inventions* of Men in the *Worſhip of God*; and to deny *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*, to thoſe who, by the Conſtitution and Laws of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, were duly qualified to receive, and had an abſolute Right to them.

Amongſt others, there are *two* ever memorable *Circumſtances* from which the flagrant Oppreſſion and Tyranny of thoſe Proceedings moſt ſtrongly appear, 1. That the *Time fixed* for the Miniſters ſubſcribing and aſſenting to the Alterations in the *Common-Prayer* was ſo ſhort, that not *one* in an hundred of thoſe who lived remote from *London* ſaw, or could be ſuppoſed to ſee them, before their *Aſſent* and *Conſent* was, under ſo ſevere a Penalty, to be *ſolemnly given*. It is a known and certain Truth, ſays one *, that the *Liturgy*, with its Alterations, to which they were *unfeignedly to aſſent*, came not out of the Preſs till *Bartholomew-Eve*; the Day enſuing, which was the *ultimate Time* fixed by the *Act* for the Miniſters Subſcription; ſo all thoſe, throughout the Kingdom, who *conformed*, except a few in *London*, ſubſcribed to they *knew not what*. "The "Matter was driven on, ſays Biſhop *Burnet*, with "ſo much *Precipitation*, that it ſeemed expected "the Clergy ſhould ſubſcribe *implicitly* to a Book "they had *never ſeen*. This was done by too many, "as the Biſhops themſelves informed me——†." Could any thing be more unrighteous or tyrannical than this?——Yes: For,

2. The unhappy *Miniſters* were obliged likewiſe to declare ſolemnly, and even to ſubſcribe a *notori-*

X *ous*,

* Tong of Schiſm, page 150.

† Hiſt. of his Time, Vol. I. page 212, Oct.

eus, moſt *dangerous* and *important* UNTRUTH, *viz. That it is not lawful upon* ANY PRETENCE WHATSOEVER *to take Arms againſt the King, or any Commiſſioned by him.*——A *Poſition* abſolutely ſubverſive of the *Britiſh* Conſtitution, and which the Nation was ſoon after (in GOD's righteous and wiſe Providence) brought openly to acknowledge to be traiterous, deteſtable, ſcandalous and falſe. A *Poſition* which, if admitted, the *glorious* REVOLUTION, and our preſent *happy* GOVERNMENT, had never taken Place; but *Tyranny* and *Popery*, with all their dire Curſes, had been bound eternally upon our Necks. But, be aſtoniſhed, O Heavens! This *falſe*, this *baſe*, this *ſcandalous* Declaration, by the Act of Uniformity, the *Miniſters*, upon Pain of loſing their Places, were obliged ſolemnly to make. Our *Fathers* nobly abhorred it; ſcorned to betray the Rights and Liberties of their Country, and to be *Tools* of arbitrary Power. For this Heroic *Refuſal* they were caſt cruelly from their Churches, and delivered up, with their ſtarving Families, to extreme Sufferings and Diſtreſs *.

This, Sir, was the ſhameful, the tyrannical Yoke, which the *Act of Uniformity* would have put upon

* " By the *Act of Uniformity*, ſays Mr. *Locke*, all the Clergy " of *England* are obliged to ſubſcribe and declare, *That it is not* " *lawful upon any Pretence whatever to take Arms againſt the* " *King*. This they readily complied with †. For you muſt " know that ſort of Men are taught rather to *obey*, than *under-* " *ſtand*. And yet that *Bartholomew-Day* was fatal to our Church " and Religion, by throwing out a very great Number of worthy, " learned, pious, orthodox *Divines* who could not come up to " this *Oath*, and other things in that *Act*. And ſo great was the " Zeal in carrying on this *Church-Affair* and ſo blind the Obedi- " ence requir'd that if you compute the time of paſſing this *Act*, " with that allowed for the *Clergy* to ſubſcribe the Book of *Com-* " *mon-Prayer* thereby eſtabliſhed, you will find it could not be " printed and diſtributed, ſo as that *one* Man in FORTY could " have *ſeen* and *read* the Book they did ſo perfectly *aſſent* and " *conſent* to." *Maiz. Col.* page 61.

† Our *two thouſand* worthy Predeceſſors excepted.

upon the Necks of our *illuſtrious* Predeceſſors; and to which, as CHRISTIANS and as PROTESTANTS they bravely ſcorned to ſubmit. Noble was the STAND which they made in Defence of Chriſtian *Liberty and Truth*. Glorious will their Names ever ſhine in the *Britiſh* Annals, whilſt *Virtue* and *Integrity* are ſacred amongſt us. Peace and everlaſting Honour be upon the Memory of theſe Chriſtian *Heroes:* Future Generations will riſe and call them bleſſed!

To their MINISTERS thus unrighteouſly and cruelly ejected, it was the *Duty* and the *Honour* of the *Chriſtian* LAITY to adhere. It was partly for *their* Liberty, and that the Goſpel might be continued in its primitive Simplicity and Purity amongſt *them*, that their Miniſters thus ſuffered: It had been inglorious then, ungrateful, and in the higheſt Degree unjuſt, to have forſaken their ejected Paſtors; and not have borne their Witneſs with them againſt the impoſing *Spirit* which then lifted itſelf up, and was faſtening a diſgraceful Yoke upon the Diſciples of *Chriſt*. Through the Favour of Heaven, a noble Spirit of *Chriſtian Fortitude* was awakened alſo in LAY-*Breaſts* (and, its Mercy be praiſed, ſtill lives; beats high; and, we hope, daily advances to the final and everlaſting Overthrow of Bigotry, Church-Tyranny and Perſecution from the Earth.) They ſaw and deteſted the dangerous and fatal *Schiſm* and *Uſurpation* upon the Rights of Conſcience, which a Part of lordly Men were ſetting up in the Church of *Chriſt*. They ſtuck faſt to their injured Miniſters, and to the Principles of Chriſtian Liberty. And GOD hath eminently bleſſed their Churches for the promoting ſincere Piety, Sobriety, and Virtue in all ſucceeding Times.

This was *the Riſe* of that SEPARATION *from the Eſtabliſhment* which I am defending in theſe Letters. A SEPARATION, which as it was founded upon *Chriſtian* and *juſt* Principles, ſo it has marvellouſly

ſubſiſted, under great worldly Diſcouragements, ſtrengthened and upheld, we truſt, by the mighty *Power of* GOD. And by the *ſame mighty Power*, we hope, will ſtill be upheld, till his Mercy ſhall diſpoſe the Hearts of our Brethren who have *caſt us out*, to receive us again.

As a *Layman*, Sir, I conſider the GOSPEL and CHRISTIAN LIBERTY as a *ſacred Depoſite* committed to me by GOD, for which I am to be *accountable* at his Tribunal hereafter. As to *theſe*, he hath expreſly charged me, and every Lay-Chriſtian, *to watch——to ſtand faſt,——to keep what is committed to me,——to fight the good Fight of Faith*, &c.—If I ſee then the *Simplicity* and *Liberty* of the GOSPEL corrupted and infringed by the Inventions, Traditions and Commandments of Men; the UNITY of the Church broken by *new Terms* of Communion, and *new Articles* of Faith impoſed upon the Diſciples. If I ſee things ridiculous *, ſuperſtitious †, erroneous ‡, brought into the Church, and made a Part of *Chriſtian* Worſhip; things dangerous to Mens Souls, and which give them wrong Notions of the Terms of Salvation and Acceptance with GOD, and which manifeſtly tend to cheriſh a falſe and *deluſive* Peace §. In this Caſe, though a *Layman*, I am bound to enter my Proteſt, and to declare openly my *Diſſent*, as I would not be condemned as a *Betrayer* of my SACRED TRUST, and would *ſtand before my* JUDGE with Confidence at laſt.

SECT.

* Reading the ſpurious, romantic, apocryphal Tables.

† Bowing at the Name of *Jeſus*; and worſhipping towards the *Eaſt*, &c.

‡ Several of the Articles, eſpecially the XXth, and the dampatory clauſes of the *Athanaſian* Creed.

§ The Abſolution of the Sick, the Burial Office and Confirmation.

SECT. VII.

Several groſs MISREPRESENTATIONS *of the Diſſenters corrected.*

I Proceed next to what you ſeem to glory in as the peculiar *Excellence* of your Letters, but which will ſoon appear, to your *very* SELF, their peculiar *Foible* and *Diſgrace*, *viz. Your retorting upon* DISSENTERS *their own Pleas and Objections*; particularly your Charge, *That they not only have, but* IMPOSE *Ceremonies in Divine Worſhip*; *and that there are various* IMPOSITIONS *amongſt ourſelves.*

You here force me to call you forth, Sir, to undergo the Mortification of ſeeing yourſelf proved, before the World, a *falſe Accuſer* of your Brethren. SITTING *at the Lord's-Supper* you have at ſeveral diſtinct Times, and with great Variety of Language, moſt *confidently* aſſerted, "*to be really* IMPOSED *by* "*us—to be* CONSTANTLY, INVARIABLY *and* UNI-"VERSALLY *practiſed amongſt us.—That it is* NEVER "*allowed to be* DEPARTED *from.—That our Miniſ-*"*ters* INSIST *upon and* REFUSE *to abate it*——*," with much more to the ſame Purpoſe. This now is a Charge, not only abſolutely *falſe*, but (which is a very *aggravating* Circumſtance, and muſt ſhock greatly your Character and Credit before the World) you had *ſeen it to be* FALSE. For, you had actually read in Dr. *Calamy*'s *Brief Account*, *&c.* a moſt expreſs Declaration that NO SUCH THING was at all *impoſed* amongſt us, but *that our Communicants were* AT LIBERTY *to uſe their* OWN POSTURE. I again put you in mind of this, becauſe you have not yet had the Honour to own the *Falſhood* of this Charge, and publickly to retract it. I can aſſure the Public, there are no leſs than *ſeven* or *eight* diſſenting

* Let. II. pages 56, 57, 58. Let. III. pages 8, 9.

senting Churches in my Neighbourhood, in which the Posture either of *standing* or *kneeling* at the Lord's-Supper has constantly been practised for many Years past (though in some of them the Persons are now deceased) and this without the least Offence, to any of the Congregation or Dislike of the Ministers.——Judge, Reader, hence what Regard is to be paid to the Representations of this zealous Censor! and how justly he describes himself *encountering with Ghosts, and groping in the Dark.*

With equal Rashness you affirmed, and still stoutly maintain.—— "That *kneeling* in Family "Prayer is ALWAYS *practised* by Dissenters; that "'tis IMPOSED and COMMANDED by the Master of "the Family upon his Children and Servants, by "his signifying his Mind to them, and letting "them know, once for all, he would have them "*kneel.**." Upon a particular Enquiry I assure the Public, that I cannot find the least Trace of any such *Imposition*, or *Signification* of the Master's Mind in any Family of Dissenters; but that, in their Family Devotions, *standing* is a Posture very *frequently* used, and not avoided in Point of Conscience, I believe, by ten Dissenters in the Kingdom. The Matter is too trifling to merit many Words. But, to let you see how utterly *unfit* you are for the Office you assume, I will take you from the *Darkness* where you miserably *grope*, and lead you to a *Light* which will a little disconcert your Countenance, by acquainting you, that at the *three* principal Dissenting *Academies* in the Southern Parts of *England*, *viz. Northampton*, *Taunton*, and *Bridgwater*, it hath been the general, if not the constant, unvaried Usage both of *Tutors* and *Students*, to STAND *at Family Prayer*. These are the *Nurseries* where most of the Dissenting Gentlemen and Ministers in *England* have been formed; whose *Custom* therefore must naturally

* II. Def. pages 70, 71.

naturally have a wide and ſtrong Influence upon Multitudes of diſſenting Families throughout the whole Land. See now with what *Truth*, with what *Honour*, and *Diſcretion* you bolt your random Cenſures at the religious Conduct of your Neighbours! and feel the juſt Pain with which they rebound and wound your own Head!

But what heightens our Perverſeneſs and Inconſiſtency, is this; that at the ſame time that we thus ALWAYS *worſhip kneeling in our Families, and the Maſter* COMMANDS *and* IMPOSES *it upon all its Members:* "Yet in our Prayers at Church, there, it "ſeems, we *always ſtand*; and it is little leſs than "*impoſed* upon our People; for ſo great and gene-"ral is the Diſcountenance that *kneeling* lies under, "that it requires ſome Courage and Reſolution for "any one to venture upon it; and if ANY ONE "*does*, you ſay it again, he WILL be CENSURED "*for it* *." A charge not more *bold*, than it is *groundleſs* and *falſe*. "One Congregation, you have "ſaid, you can name, where great Offence was "given by a Perſon kneeling at her Prayers." But you have publickly been told, by an Authority of great weight, which I preſume you durſt not contradict, *that the whole Account is a* MISREPRESENTATION; *of which the moſt authentic Evidence is ready to be produced* †. Did I not juſtly ſay, that your Informers had *ſerved you ill?* A Man *conſcious* of his own *Darkneſs*, ſhould be cautious into what Hands he delivers himſelf up.

Beſides, could you have made good the Charge, not againſt *one* only, but even an *hundred* of our Churches; will this juſtify the *Univerſality* and *Poſitiveneſs* of your Aſſertion, *that if* ANY ONE *kneels amongſt us, he* WILL BE CENSURED *for it?* This publickly accuſes not *one* only, nor an *hundred*, but ALL

* II. Def. page 72.

† Chandler's Caſe of Subſcription, page 14.

ALL the Diſſenting Churches of this ridiculous *Weakneſs*; which yet you cannot prove upon any ſingle *one* of them all. The *Reproach* therefore comes back with great Force upon yourſelf.——I have made no extenſive Enquiries on this Head, but can take upon me to aſſure you, there are no leſs than *ſix* or *ſeven* of our Congregations near me (I believe there are many more) where KNEELING *at public Prayer* hath been conſtantly practiſed by by one or more Members without the leaſt Diſcountenance. And of the many Miniſters I have conſulted, I find not one who imagines the Practice would give Offence to any ſingle Congregation amongſt us.

Alike juſt and well ſupported is that other Reproach, "*That it is generally held amongſt us that* "*the Sacrament is for none but* PERFECT *and* CON-"SUMMATE *Chriſtians.*" After multiplying on this Subject many Words to little Purpoſe, unleſs it be to ſhew the Reluctance with which you do it, you are at laſt forced to *retract* this injurious Imputation as to the *Preſbyterians* * (who are by far the greater Part of the Diſſenters) and acknowledge it to be *falſe*. You might have done the ſame by the *Independents*, whom you ſtill leave under its Weight. For though they are generally more *minute*, I fear, in enquiring after Proofs of the *Sincerity* of a Man's Chriſtianity than the Scriptures authoriſe them; yet there is ſcarce one to be found, I believe, amongſt the moſt rigid of them all, who will not declare, that *every* SINCERE *Chriſtian hath a Right to the Lord's Table.* For do they not all acknowledge that every ſuch Perſon is become, by the Goſpel Covenant, a *Child of* GOD, *and a Brother of* JESUS CHRIST? Will the moſt rigid *Independent*, ſay, then, that *ſuch* have not a Right to eat of the *ſacramental* Supper? No, the *Truth of Grace*, they will tell

* II. Def. page 36.

ell you, be it in ever ſo *weak* a State, intitles to he Sacrament. You wrong them therefore much y ſaying, that they hold it *to belong to* NONE *but* PERFECT *and* CONSUMMATE *Chriſtians.*

Thus groundleſs and ill ſupported, Sir, are the *Defamations* of your Diſſenting Brethren, which your *Ear* hath been wide extended greedily to receive, and your *Hand* ſo officious to publiſh to the World. But ſuffer, I beſeech you, the Council of a Friend. Put away far from you that little, ungenerous, unmanly, bigotted Spirit by which " *You* " *adviſe the Faithful to ſhun the Converſation and Com-* " *pany of our Miniſters,*——*as being* NOTORIOUS " SINNERS, *and not to have any intimate unneceſſary* " *Acquaintance with them, or Familiarity in common* " *Life* *." Indulge the more Chriſtian and Catholic Diſpoſition Dr. *Nichols* recommends, who informs the World with Pleaſure " *of the charitable* " *Correſpondence, and ſtrict Degree of Friendſhip* " *which ſubſiſts betwixt the eſtabliſhed Clergy and ſome* " *of the Diſſenting Miniſters* †." 'Tis becauſe they *know* one another no more, that they do not *love* each other better. *Shyneſs* begets Eſtrangement, *Eſtrangement*, Averſion, and *Averſion* prepares the Mind not only to receive with Pleaſure, but induſtriouſly to propagate groſs Miſrepreſentations, falſe Accuſations, ſcandalous and little Things, utterly without Foundation, and contrary to Truth.

Had you freely converſed with the *Diſſenting Miniſters* around you, as the learned *Doctor* adviſes, you had ſaved yourſelf a good deal of public *Mortification*, which your injurious Accounts both of their Principles and Practice have now unhappily drawn upon you. Cultivate at length, Sir, a *familiar Acquaintance* with them. Their Acquaintance will do you Honour; will edify and enlarge

* Let. II. page 8. Let I. page 83. † Nich. Def. page 145.

your Mind; will give you juſter Notions of Men and of Things than a mere *College* Education is capable of doing, and prepare you for that happy World where Bigotry and Party-Zeal no more *alienate* pious Spirits, but *where* ALL *the Children of* GOD *are gathered together in* ONE. From them you would have learned——that the Ceremonies of the Sweeping Cloak, of kneeling at Ordination, of the People's holding up their Hands at that Solemnity, of ſtriking a Covenant with their Paſtors, of giving the Name at Baptiſm,——are moſt of them never uſed at all in the greater Part of the diſſenting Churches; and the other not the leaſt *impoſed*; full Liberty is given to uſe, or to uſe them not; no ſtreſs is laid upon them; much leſs are they made *indiſpenſible Terms* of Chriſtian Communion; as *Sponſors*, the *Croſs*, and *kneeling* are with you. They would, moreover, have told you, what you ſeem not to know, that 'tis not the mere *uſing* Ceremonies, againſt which Diſſenters object, ſo much as the *impoſing* them; the laying *a ſtreſs* upon them; the conſidering them as *Decorations* and *Improvements* of Chriſtian Worſhip; not only *uſeful*, but NECESSARY *Inſtitutions* (as you had the Irreverence to your divine *Lawgiver* to pronounce concerning *Sponſors*) and the making Compliance with *them*, *Terms* of Reception into the Family and Church of *Chriſt*. And finally, they would have told you, that Mens *uncovering the Head* in Prayer, is by no means a mere *Ceremony*, but a *Circumſtance* or *Act* of Worſhip, which ſeems dictated by the Light of Nature; and is commanded by an Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* xi. 3, 4, 7; and that therefore, your placing *this* in the Rank of *Ceremonies* practiſed by Diſſenters, was (to return your own Compliment) moſt certainly a very *heedleſs* and *wrong-headed* thing.

" The Neglect of *private faſting*," is another Charge you advance againſt us, " and inſiſt confi-
" dently that you were in the right in ſaying it was
" very

" very little, if at all, practiſed amongſt us*." Diſſenters, Sir, I preſume, have read that Inſtruction of their Maſter, *Mat.* vi. 17. *Thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thy Head, and waſh thy Face; that thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but to thy Father which is in Heaven.* Though they affect not to flouriſh with their *Vigils* and *Lents* (which with Sorrow they ſee turned into little elſe than a *religious Farce* by too many around them) nor, like the *Phariſee* are oſtentatious in telling GOD and *the World* how often they faſt; yet this Duty, I am perſuaded, is practiſed with much Serioufneſs amongſt them. Beſides the excellent Diſcourſe of *Bennet*, to which you were referred, you call for more Tracts. See another on the ſame Subject in the *Morning Exerciſe* by *Barker*; and from the Lives of the two *Henrys*, *Allen*, *Baxter*, *Troſs*, *&c.* particularly, of the late moſt ingenious and pious *Abernethy*, you may learn what are their religious Sentiments and Practice as to this Matter. In many of their Churches there are ſtated periodical Faſts, beſides the perſonal domeſtic ones, which upon extraordinary Occaſions are not unuſual amongſt them.

But was it poſſible you ſhould ſo alertly attack us on this Head, when you knew it in our Power with ſuch Advantage to retort! If " you have met with " no Sermons or Tracts of Diſſenters recommend- " ing *private Faſts*"——Pray, have you met with any which *diſcourage* and *forbid* them? But, have you never yet met with your own LXXIId *Canon?* which ſays, " *No Miniſter ſhall without Licence of* " *the Biſhop, under his* HAND *and* SEAL, *keep any* " SOLEMN FASTS *either publickly or in any* PRIVATE " HOUSE, *other than ſuch as are appointed by Law,* " *nor be* preſent *at any of them; under pain of* SUS- " PENSION *for the firſt Fault, of* EXCOMMUNICA- " TION *for the ſecond, and of* DEPOSITION *from the*

 " *Miniſtry*

* II. Def. page 47.

" *Miniſtry for the third.*" This Sir, is the exalted Foot, upon which the Duty of *private Faſting* ſtands in your Church! Could any thing then be more *wiſe*, more *pertinent*, or more *juſt* than the Cenſures you deal us here?

As to the Poſture of STANDING *at public Prayer*, for which alſo you had the *Sagacity* ſharply to reprehend us; beſides the great Variety of *Scripture Examples* which I produced in its Juſtification, you have had ſince, from a learned Hand *, indiſputable Proofs from *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, *Jerome* and *Auſtin*, that it was *the Poſture* in which the Chriſtian Churches univerſally offered up their public and moſt ſolemn Addreſſes to GOD through all the *Primitive* Times. So unlucky is your Hand, that the Bolts you fling at us, *as Debaſers of the Public Worſhip*, *&c.* light directly upon the Heads of ſome of the moſt *ſacred* and *venerable* Perſons which either *Scripture* or *Antiquity* holds out to your View!

" But the Inſtances of *Abraham*, *Moſes*, *Samuel*, " *&c.* STANDING *in Prayer* ſerve, you ſay, to little " purpoſe; unleſs it were alſo ſhewn, that they " were Inſtances of ſuch *ſimple mere ſtanding* as is " practiſed in our Congregations †." Yes; they are full to our Purpoſe; becauſe it appears not from the *ſacred Story*, but they were Inſtances of exactly ſuch *ſimple mere ſtanding* as is uſed amongſt us. As to the *other Geſtures* of Devotion which your *Imagination* would ſupply, *the* SCRIPTURES are wholly ſilent; and your fertile Imagination, Sir, you will excuſe us from accepting as a proper Supplement to the *Word of* GOD.

" The *primitive* Chriſtians, it ſeems, cannot be " imagined to do no more than *barely keep upon* " *their*

* Chandler's Caſe of Subſcrip. pages. 11, 12.

† II. Def. page 76.

" *their Feet.* —— No, they prayed with Hands " ſpread, and with Eyes lift up toward Heaven *" —— Hence then we infer; *firſt*, That they did not read their Prayers from a *Book:* That there were no *Liturgies* in thoſe Days. But the Paſtor, as *Juſtin Martyr* and *Origen* ſay, offered up Prayers and Praiſes to God οση δυνάμις ϗ κατα δυναμιν, *according to his Power*, or as *he was able*. But, *ſecondly*, by the Account which both *Cyprian* and *Tertullian* give of their *Geſture* and *Manner*, the public Prayers in *Diſſenting Churches* vaſtly more reſemble it than thoſe offered in *yours*. " *Stamus ad orationem,*—— " *Cum modeſtia & humilitate adorantes, &c.*†" *We* STAND *at Prayer,—adoring with Modeſty and Humility, that we may the more effectually commend our Prayers to* GOD; *not even lifting up our Hands high, but moderately and decently, no nor boldly elevating our Faces. For the* Publican *whoſe Countenance as well as Prayers was* HUMBLE *and* DEJECTED, *went away juſtified rather than the ſawcy* Phariſee.

When you have ſedately conſidered the Contents of this *Section*, you will ſee Cauſe, Sir, once more to reſume your *cenſorial* Rod, and to lay it ſmartly on *yourſelf*; condemning heartily your own *Temerity*, in preſuming to write ſo freely about *Perſons* and *Things* you knew ſo little of; and to pronounce peremptorily upon Matters you had ſo ſlightly examined.

Though this Article of *your* MISREPRESENTATIONS might be vaſtly enlarged, I conclude with a freſh flagrant Inſtance of it ‡, which ſhews your *Honour* and *Juſtice* in a very unfavourable Light, and too plainly demonſtrates that your Zeal for the Church hath juſt *eaten them up*. It is the Caſe " of " a Diſſenting Miniſter in *Cambridge*, whom *you* " *knew*; and who, you affirm, declared from his " Pulpit, *that the Common-Prayer-Book had damned more*

* II. Def. page 77. † Tert. de Orat. Cap. 13.

‡ II. Def. page 116.

" *more Souls, than the Bible had ſaved*; for which " he was indicted, and had his public Trial as a " depraver of it."——Here you ſtop ſhort, and *leave* that injured Gentleman; yea, you *tranſmit* him to Poſterity, under the Scandal of the Indictment, without having the *Honeſty* and the *Virtue* to inform the World of the Iſſue which you could not but alſo *know, viz. that after a long and full Hearing, on both Sides, he was by the Jury* HONOURABLY ACQUITTED. This, Sir, is ſuch an Inſtance of Partiality, Injuſtice and notorious Miſrepreſentation, as all virtuous and wiſe Men will behold with Indignation, and as, I am ſure, muſt give you a good deal of Pain in the review. The Caſe of that injured Miniſter (Mr. *Joſeph Huſſey*) has been ſince publiſhed (printed at *Colcheſter* in your Neighbourhood 1737) which I cannot doubt, you have ſeen. From thence it fully appears, that Mr. *Huſſey* ſpake HONOURABLY, not *reproachfully* of the COMMON-PRAYER, in the Sermon referred to; and that he deſerved highly that *Acquittal* and *Triumph* over his Enemies which the *Juſtice* of his Country gave him; but which you *injuriouſly* endeavour to blaſt and ſuppreſs *.

SECT. VIII.

Diſſenters not INCONSISTENT *in ſubmitting to ſome Ceremonies, and refuſing others.*

THIS is another Charge advanced vigorouſly againſt us——" The Ceremonies of *Mar-*
" *riage*

* He was ſhewing how utterly repugnant the *Arminian* Principles are to ſeveral Parts of the *Common-Prayer*; and after ſeveral things ſaid very reſpectfully of that Book, concludes,——" I " wiſh there was more of that *Spirit of* GOD breathing in the " Souls of Men now, which breathed in the Souls of thoſe who " made the *Common-Prayer*; and indeed conſidering the Incon- " ſiſtency of Mens Principles, with their groſs Hypocriſies in " Practice, I fear that at the great Day, when the Books are " opened, this Book of *Common-Prayer*, when 'tis opened, will
" come

" *riage* and of *Burial* to which we conform, are " injoined in the ſame *Manner*, by the ſame *Autho-* " *rity*, and in the ſame *Place* (the Common-Prayer) " as the other Ceremonies and Rites againſt which " we proteſt." And you put it as a ſtunning Difficulty,—" WHERE and WHEN the Magiſtrate " preſcribed the Marriage Ceremonies *otherwiſe* " than he did thoſe of Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper *." I am truly ſurprized, Sir, that ſo mere a Cobweb entangles you. Pray, what is your *Common-Prayer!* Is it any thing in the World but a mere *Statute* or *Act of Parliament*; as really and truly ſuch, and nothing but ſuch, as any *Statute* in our Books of Law. Now as the *Magiſtrate* has in this *Statute* injoined ſome Things of a *Civil* nature, which belong therefore to his Kingdom, and which he has a Right to injoin; to theſe we reverently ſubmit: But as he has alſo, in the ſame *Statute*, injoined other Things of a *Religious* Nature (pertaining to *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's-Supper*) which, we humbly apprehend, belong to *another* Kingdom, even that of JESUS CHRIST; to whom, and to *whom* ALONE, GOD the Supreme Governor has appropriated *ſuch Things*; as to theſe, we crave Leave to withhold our Submiſſion, and chuſe *to obey* GOD *rather than* MAN. And behold, the *very Magiſtrate* who made the *Statute*, has indulged us herein! has *excuſed* our Obedience in the Points as to which we ſcruple! has *repealed* the Obligation of this Law upon Diſſenters; and allows them to act in theſe things as to their Judgment ſeems beſt! Is there any thing in the leaſt difficult or entangling in all this?

" But

" come in a ſwift Witneſs againſt them. And if ſo, I fear it " will be found that that Book they now ſo much *rely* on, may " be a means of ſending more of them to Hell, than the Goſpel " converts in *England*."

* II. Def. page 80. Let. III. page 6.

" But upon this Suppoſition all our Objections to " the Burial Office as Reaſons againſt Conformity " fall to the Ground. For if the whole Tranſac- " tion be a *political* thing; and the Gentleman of- " ficiating is, in *that*, no other than an *Officer of* " *the State*, how is the Church, for the Lord's " Sake, concerned in any thing he either ſays or " does, on that Occaſion * ?" Certainly very much. The *Church* is indeed nothing but a Branch or Limb of the STATE. But if the STATE exacts of *thoſe*, whom it deputes to officiate in this Part of its Adminiſtration, *unreaſonable* and *ſhocking* things; if it commands them to ſay that *black* is *white*, to pronounce ſolemnly a Man ſaved, whom they think verily to be *loſt*; and to *thank* GOD *that in his great Mercy he hath taken to himſelf* an abominable Sinner, when in their Conſciences they believe that GOD *took him away in Wrath*, and hath driven him *from his Preſence* to eternal Darkneſs below,——is the *Officer*, will you ſay, who is to pronounce and to do this, *not at all concerned therein?* Nor *that Branch* of the Adminiſtration in which he officiates at all *wounded* in its Honour or Reputation thereby? Moſt deeply, no doubt. And all virtuous and good Men, by the eternal Regards they owe to RIGHTEOUSNESS and TRUTH, ought openly to proteſt againſt ſuch public Violations of them; and to declare their Diſlike of ſuch Proſtitution of *ſacred* things.

The Church, your learned *Warburton* † tells you, *has* by Contract or Alliance, *reſigned up her* SUPREMACY *in Matters eccleſiaſtical, and her* INDEPENDENCY *to the State*. The STATE, in Conſequence of this, hath drawn up for her, *Articles of Faith* and *Forms of public Worſhip*, which it requires the Church to *ſubſcribe* and to *uſe*.——Hard Fate of unhappy *Church!* To come as Pupil to the STATE, to aſk *what* ſhe muſt believe, and *how* ſhe muſt worſhip; yea, to be forced ſolemnly to *ſubſcribe*

* II. Def. page 82. † Alliance, &c. page 87.

ſcribe ARTICLES, which ſhe by no means believes, and to *uſe* FORMS of public Worſhip, which ſhe greatly *diſlikes!* But, is there no Prevarication, nor Hypocriſy in all this? No; the STATE hath *commanded* it; and we are to be *ſubject to the higher Powers*, and to *obey thoſe who have the Rule over us:* 'Tis not for a Man's *private* Conſcience to kick againſt the PUBLIC; but if any one dare ſay,——"*That ei-*" *ther of the* ARTICLES *is in* ANY PART *erroneous*; " *or that the Book of* COMMON-PRAYER *contains* " ANY THING *in it contrary to Scripture*;" your IVth and Vth *Canons* thunder out upon him *ipſo facto*, a moſt terrible *Excommunication*, and cut him off, as a *wicked Wretch*, from the Body of CHRIST. ——Excellent Conſtitution this! quite holy and apoſtolick! moſt heavenly and divine! bearing upon every Part a lively and glorious Impreſs of the Character of JESUS CHRIST!——What Wonder, if the Dignity of the *Prieſtly* Character ſinks? If *Religion* is ridiculed, and its *Sacred Things* treated with Drollery and Jeſt? *It is impoſſible*, we are told, *but Offences will come*; *but* wo *be to that Man!* wo be to thoſe Chriſtians, whoſe hypocritical and corrupt Conduct lays theſe *Stones of ſtumbling* in the Way of Infidels and Papiſts! and *by whom the Offence cometh!*

SECT. IX.

The egregious Abſurdity of rejecting PRESBYTERIAN *and admitting* POPISH *Ordinations.*

WE come next to the much conteſted Point of *Orders* or *Ordination*, as to which you are wont to make a mighty ſolemn Parade. The Severity with which you nullify the *Diſſenters* Ordination, though the *very* SAME with that of all the *illuſtrious Churches of* PROTESTANTS abroad, when

at the ſame Time you are ſo complaiſant as to acknowledge the Validity of the Ordinations of the *Church of Rome*, is a Conduct ſo extraordinary as one cannot eaſily comprehend. The Hands and the devouteſt Prayers of a Company of truly virtuous, religious and Chriſtian PRESBYTERS, in *Scotland* or *Geneva*, are not ſo efficacious, it ſeems, to ſend a Man forth a TRUE *Miniſter* in the Church of CHRIST, as the Hands and ſuperſtitious Prayers of an antichriſtian, idolatrous, perſecuting and wicked BISHOP of *Italy* or *Spain*.——No; let a Prieſt, ordained by one of *theſe*, come over to the Church of *England*; he ſhall be received as a *valid* Miniſter, *rightfully* ordained: But, let another, ordained by the moſt learned, religious PRESBYTERY which *Germany*, *Hungary* or the whole World can boaſt, come over alſo to *this* Church, this *Proteſtant* Church; his Orders ſhall be pronounced NOT VALID, he muſt ſubmit to be ordain'd *afreſh*. The FORMER is admitted, as one *rightly* and *duely* enter'd a *Paſtor* in the Chriſtian Church, becauſe a *Biſhop*'s Hand was laid upon him, though with a great many ridiculous, ſuperſtitious and fooliſh Rites; and though he was really no CHRISTIAN *Biſhop*, but an Apoſtate from *Chriſtianity*, an open and avowed Idolater and Perſecutor of the *Flock* of CHRIST; yea, tho' the *Church* alſo into which by that Ceremony, he was enter'd was *ſo far from being a* TRUE CHURCH, *that for* 900 *Years paſt*, *nothing can be more* *.—— But the LATTER, though ſet apart to the Miniſtry by the moſt fervent and holy Prayers; tho' he has long labour'd in the *Church of* GOD with great Diligence and Succeſs; has ſuffer'd, perhaps, the Loſs of all for the ſake of CHRIST and *his Truth*; and is fled hither from the Rage of *idolatrous and cruel Biſhops*; yet (ſtrange to relate!) for not having had

* The Words of the *Homily* which every Clergyman ſubſcribes his ſolemn Approbation of.

had the Hand of such an idolatrous and cruel *Bishop* in the Ceremony of his Ordination, he is consider'd but as a *mere* LAYMAN in this protestant Church of *England*; he shall not, cannot, be acknowledg'd by us as *a Minister* of JESUS CHRIST. How mysterious and quite astonishing is the *Partiality* of this!

But let us hear your Censure on this Head,—— "Our Ministers are not duly ordain'd to their Office: "their Ministrations are most certainly irregu- "lar; an unnecessary and wanton, if not a factious "Departure from the primitive Order, and there- "fore those who attend them cannot depend that "such Ordinances will be blessed to them, nor can "they be *pleasing to* GOD *." And concerning the establish'd *presbyterian* Church of *Scotland*, you affirm,—— "*That having renounced* EPISCOPACY, "*and their Ordinations being irregular, their* COM- "MUNION *can be neither* SAFE *nor* LAWFUL †." A most schismatical and rash Judgment; which *equally* condemns ALL the illustrious REFORMED Churches of *France*, *Holland*, *Switzerland*, *Germany*, *Poland*, *Hungary*, *Denmark*, *&c.* They ALL likewise have renounc'd *Episcopacy*; their *Ordinations* therefore must be irregular, and their *Communion* neither *safe* nor *lawful*.

But to give you, Sir, more just and favourable Impressions of Ordination by *Presbyters*; and to sink a little your Esteem of that *episcopal Ordination* on which you pique yourself so much, I recommend to your Consideration the following things:

1. That *Timothy* was ordain'd by the *laying on of the Hands of the* PRESBYTERY, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14,—— That *Paul* and *Barnabas* were ordained by certain *Prophets* and *Teachers* in the Church of *Antioch*, and not by *any* BISHOP (of whom there is not a Word in all that Solemnity) *presiding* in that City, *Acts*

* Let. I. page 73, 74. † II. Def. page 145.

xiii. 1, 2, 3,——And that it is a well known, acknowledg'd, inconteſtible Fact that *Preſbyters*, in the celebrated Church of *Alexandria*, ordain'd even their own *Biſhops* for more than 200 Years in the earlieſt Ages of Chriſtianity.

2. *Biſhops* and *Preſbyters* are in Scripture the *very ſame*; and are not a diſtinct *Order* or *Office* in the Chriſtian Church. The Church at *Philippi* had but *two* Orders of Church-Officers amongſt them, *viz. Biſhops* and *Deacons*, *Philip.* i. 1. And that the Name, Office, Work of a *Biſhop* and *Preſbyter* are the *ſame*, appears from *Tit.* i. 5, 7. *For this Cauſe left I thee in* Crete, *that thou ſhouldſt ordain* Preſbyters *in every City*, FOR *a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs.*—*Paul* called the *Preſbyters* of the Church of *Epheſus* together, and charged them, *Acts* xx. 27, 28. *To take heed to the Flock over which the* HOLY GHOST *had made them* BISHOPS Επισκοπους. So 1 *Pet.* v. 1, 2. *The* PRESBYTERS, *among you I exhort, who alſo am a* PRESBYTER, *feed the Flock of* GOD *among you, performing the Office of* BISHOPS επισκοπουντες.

The Superiority of *Biſhops* to *Preſbyters* is not only by the firſt Reformers and Founders of the Church of *England*, but by many of its moſt learned and eminent Doctors ſince; not pretended to be of *divine*, but only of *human* Inſtitution; not grounded upon *Scripture*, but only upon the *Cuſtom* or *Ordinances* of this Realm. "*The Truth is, that in the* "*New Teſtament there is no Mention of any Degree* "*or Diſtinction of Orders, but only of* DEACONS *or* "*Miniſters, and of* PRIESTS *or Biſhops*——", ſays a *Declaration of the Function, &c.* which was ſign'd by more than thirty-ſeven *Civilians* and *Divines*, amongſt whom were *thirteen* BISHOPS*. The Book intitled the *Inſtitution of a Chriſtian Man* ſubſcrib'd by the Clergy and Convocation and confirm'd by Parliament, *owns* BISHOPS *and* PRESBYTERS *by Scripture*

* Burnet's Hiſt. of the Reformat. Vol. I. Ap. page 321.

Scripture to be the same *. And says, tho' St. *Paul* consecrated and ordered *Bishops* by Imposition of Hands; yet there is no certain Rule prescribed in Scripture for the nomination, election, or presentation of them: This is left to the positive Laws of every Country. And that the main Ground of settling *episcopal* Government in this Nation was not any Pretence of *Divine* Right, but the *Convenience* of that Form of Church-Government to the State and Condition of the Church at the time of the *Reformation*, your learned *Stillingfleet* † affirms, and proves it to be the Sentiment of Archbishop *Cranmer* and other chief Reformers both in *Edward* VI. and Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign, of Archbishop *Whitegift*, Bishop *Bridges*, *Loe*, *Hooker*, *Sutcliffe*, *Hales*, *Chillingworth*, *&c.* ‡——Yea,

3. It deserves your serious Consideration whether, by the Constitution and Frame of the Church of *England*, SACERDOTAL *Ordination* be really at all *necessary* to the making a valid Minister, and to the giving Success and Efficacy to his Ministrations; or, whether there is, really, any SUCH *Ordination* in the Church of *England* at all? It seems clearly the

* To the same Purpose speaks *the Erudition of a Christian Man.*

† Irenic. Ch. VIII. page 385.

‡ See a Letter of Dr. *Raynolds* of *Oxford* on this Head; where he declares the sameness of *Bishops* and *Priests*, or that they have *equal* Authority and Power by GOD's *Word* to have been the Judgment of St. *Paul*, *Chrysostom*, *Jerome*, *Ambrose*, *Austin*, *Theodorus*, *Primasius*, *Theophylact*, *Oecumenius*, *Aenselm*, *Gregory*, *Gratian*, the *Waldenses*, *Wickliffites*, *Hussites*, *&c.* Neal. Hist. Purit. Vol. I. page 497.

Archbishop *Bancroft* and the rest of the Bishops with him owned the Ordination of *Presbyters* to be valid, and therefore refused to re-ordain the *Scottish* Presbyters who were then to be made Bishops, declaring, *That to doubt it, was to doubt whether there were any lawful Vocation in most of the reformed Churches.* Archbishop *Spotswood*'s Hist. page 514. The Bishops of *Scotland*, when *Episcopacy* was settled there, never required the Presbyterian Ministers to take *episcopal* Ordination. *Bishop* Burnet's *Vindicat.* pages 84, 85.

the Sentiment of our first *Reformers* that it was not ; and that they established the Church of *England* agreeable to this Plan. For in a select Assembly of Divines, convened by the Authority of King *Edward* VI, for the settling important Points relating to Religion, it was determined, as may be presumed from a recorded Opinion of Archbishop *Cranmer* their President,——*, " That though, in the Ad- " mission of Bishops, Parsons, Vicars, and other " *Priests* to their Office, there be divers comely " *Ceremonies* and *Solemnities* used (he speaks chiefly " of *Ordination*) yet *these* be not of *Necessity*, but " only for good Order and seemly Fashion. For if " such Offices and Ministrations were committed " WITHOUT such Solemnity, they were neverthe- " less *truely* committed. And there is no more " Promise of GOD that Grace is given in the com- " mitting of the *ecclesiastical* Office, than it is in the " committing the *civil*.——A *Bishop* may make a " *Priest by the* Scriptures, and so may *Princes* and " *Governors* also, and that by the *Authority of* GOD " committed to them ; and the *People* also by their " *Election*. For as we read that Bishops have done " it, so Christian Emperors and Princes usually " have done it : And the People, before Christian " Princes were, commonly did *elect* their Bishops " and Priests.——In the new Testament, he that " is appointed to be a Bishop or a Priest, needeth " no *Consecration* by the Scripture ; for Election or " appointing thereto is *sufficient* †."

Agreeable hereto, the *Bishops* in this Church, in the Reigns of *Hen.* VIII. and *Edw.* VI. took out Com-

* Vide Extract from Archbishop *Cranmer*'s M. S. Stilling. Iren. Chap. VIII. page 391.

† To the same Purpose speaks the *Erudition of a Christian Man*—which was drawn up by a Committee of *Bishops* and *Divines*, and read and approved by the *Lords* Spiritual and Temporal, and the lower House of Parliament. An. 1543. Vid. *Neal*'s Hist. Purit. Vol. I. pages 33, 36.

Commiſſions from *the* CROWN, like other STATE-OFFICERS, for the Exerciſing their *ſpiritual* Juriſdiction; in which they acknowledge,—— "That "ALL SORTS *of Juriſdiction*, as well eccleſiaſtical "as civil, flow ORIGINALLY from the *Regal* "Power, as from a SUPREME HEAD, the Foun-"tain and Spring of all Magiſtracy within this "Kingdom; and that they ought with *grateful* "Minds to acknowledge this Favour derived from "the KING's Liberality and Indulgence; and ac-"cordingly they ought to render it up whenever "the KING thought fit to require it of them. And "amongſt the Particulars of *eccleſiaſtical* Power "given them by this Commiſſion, is that of OR-"DAINING *Preſbyters*; and all this to laſt no lon-"ger than the King's Pleaſure. And theſe things "are ſaid to be *ſuper* and *ultra* over and above "what belongs to them by Scripture *." †

From theſe *Commiſſions*, which the Biſhops took out, eſpecially *Bonner*'s Biſhop of *London*, it is evident, that all the *Power of* ORDINATION which the Biſhops had, or could have and exerciſe, in this Kingdom, they derived entirely from the CIVIL MAGISTRATE, and *only* from him ‡. And that this really is the Caſe as to the *Eccleſiaſtical Orders* conferred by our *preſent* Biſhops; that all the Validity, Significancy

* Rights Chr. Ch. Pref. page 39.

† Even Archdeacon *Echard* acknowledges, that in the Reign of *Hen.* VIII. the *Biſhops* took out, and acted, by *Commiſſions* in which they were but *Subaltern* to the King's *Vicegerent:* But in the Reign of *Edward* VI. none being in that Office they were immediately under the KING: But by theſe Commiſſions they declare, "that they held their *Biſhoprics* only during the *King*'s "Pleaſure, and were impowered in the *King*'s Name, as *his* "Delegates, to perform ALL THE PARTS OF THE EPISCO-"PAL FUNCTION," *Echard*'s Hiſt. Eng. page 299.

‡ Anno 1550, an order of Council was made that ſome Biſhops and other learned Men ſhould deviſe an Order for the CREATION of *Biſhops* and *Prieſts*. Burnet's Hiſt. Refor. Vol. III. page 195.

nificancy or Weight which they have in *this* Church they derive *purely* and *ſolely* from the Authority of the MAGISTRATE inconteſtibly appears hence; namely, that the Magiſtrate has *authoritatively* directed and preſcribed HOW and TO WHOM *Ordination* is to be given *. And ſhould an *Ordination* be given by all the Biſhops of this Church in OTHER *Manner* and OTHER *Form* than *that* preſcribed by the Magiſtrate, *ſuch Ordination* would be of no Legality at all, nor Authority in *this* Church. The Man *ſo ordained* would be no proper Miniſter in the Church of *England*. A Miniſter in the Church of *Chriſt*, he poſſibly might be; but he would, I repeat it, be no Miniſter in the Church of *England*; nor would have *Power* and *Authority* to officiate as a Prieſt *therein* †.

The Church of *England*, if you duely weigh it, ſeems evidently conſtituted upon the *congregational* or *independent* Plan. 'Tis from *the* PEOPLE (in other Words, from the King and Parliament, in whom the *People* have lodged their Power) that all the officers in this Church receive their whole Authority and are directed *how to act*. In all their ORDINATIONS, *Juriſdictions*, *Miniſtrations*, its Biſhops and Prieſts act entirely by an Authority committed to them by the *Civil Magiſtrate*, received originally from *the* PEOPLE. So that as *the* PEOPLE, by their Repre-

* Vid. the Judgment of the Court in the Caſe of *Howel*, a Nonjuring Clergyman, ordained by Dr. *Hicks* (*Tindal*'s Hiſt. of Eng. Vol. IV. page 502.) His Ordination was pronounced *illegal*, and he diſowned as a *Clergyman*. Vid. a Statute 8 of *Eliz.* in Fuller's Ch. Hiſt. Book ix. page 80.

† The Biſhop at an Ordination aſks,—"*Are you called according to the Will of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the* DUE ORDER OF THIS REALM."

Note, It is not ſufficient to make him a Miniſter in *this Church* that he is called according to the Will or Inſtitution of JESUS CHRIST, if he be not alſo called according to the *due Order of* THIS REALM.

Repreſentatives, are ſuppoſed to have authoriſed, directed, and appointed them to act; ſo, and ſo only, are all the *Archbiſhops*, *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* in this Church to officiate, and to diſcharge their ſeveral Functions therein. And if they preſume to tranſgreſs the bounds which *the* PEOPLE, by their Repreſentatives, have ſet them; and to officiate OTHERWISE than in the *Form* and *Manner* preſcribed, their Miniſtrations are illegal and of no Authority in this Church.

This, Sir, I appeal to all who know our *Conſtitution*, is the real and true Nature of your boaſted EPISCOPAL *Ordination*, as it now ſtands in our Church. 'Tis an *Ordination* performed by a *civil Officer*, *i. e.* by one who officiates only by an Authority derived to him from the *civil Magiſtrate*, and the Legality of whoſe Miniſtrations, and their Efficacy in this Church, depends entirely upon his obſerving the *Manner* and *Forms* which the Magiſtrate hath injoined —— *Ordinations* then, in the Church of *England*, if traced to their proper Origin and rightly conſidered, are in truth nothing but merely *civil* or *popular* Ordinations.

Nor let it be here replied,—That theſe *Biſhops*, who by the Laws of *England* are impowered to ordain, are at the ſame Time to be conſidered as *Succeſſors* of the Apoſtles, and have received *Power of Ordination* from theſe Founders of the Chriſtian Church by an *uninterrupted lineal Deſcent*. For the Conſtitution and Law of *England* knows nothing at all of this; it reſts not *this Power*, which it commits to its Biſhops, upon any ſuch *lineal Succeſſion* or *Deſcent* (which it knows to be a Rope of Sand, a ridiculous *Chimera*, a Thing which no Man upon Earth is able to make out) No; but it conſiders *the* KING, veſted (by Act of Parliament, or the Suffrage of the People) with a FULNESS *of* ALL *Power Eccleſiaſtical* in theſe Realms, as *empowering* and *authoriſing* Biſhops to ordain. This Power of

Ordination was once delegated to *Cromwel*, a LAYMAN, as Vicegerent to the King. And by the Conſtitution and Law of *England* this Layman had then as much Authority *to ordain* as any *Biſhop* in the Realm; and any *Prieſt* whom he had ordained would have been as much *a Miniſter* in the Church of *England*, and his Miniſtrations as valid, as if all the Biſhops of the Realm had laid their Hands on his Head *. But,

4. The only poſſible way of avoiding this Difficulty, is recurring to the wretched Refuge of POPISH *Ordinations*, and deriving the Validity of your Orders and Miniſtrations, and your Powers of *Ordination*, from the idolatrous *Church of* ROME. If you derive them not from the CIVIL *Magiſtrate*, you muſt from POPISH *Biſhops*. A deſperate Refuge this! attended with a Train of monſtrous Abſurdities! all which yet, rather than admit the *Orders* of foreign *Proteſtant Divines* and the Regularity of their Miniſtrations, you reſolutely ſwallow.

That POPERY is an undoubted fundamental *Subverſion* of the whole Scheme of Chriſtianity.—That it is that APOSTACY *from the Chriſtian Faith*, deſcribed by St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 1, 2, 3.—The MAN OF SIN *and the* SON OF PERDITION *ſitting in the Temple* (Church) *of* GOD; *oppoſing, and exalting himſelf above all that is called* GOD, foretold by the HOLY GHOST, 2 *Theſ.* ii. 3, 4.—And that the *Church of Rome* is repreſented by the *Prophetic Spirit* in the Revelation of St. *John*, as an *adulterous and bloody* WOMAN, which hath broken the Marriage Covenant that eſpouſed her to CHRIST, and is fallen into a State of abominable and open *Lewdneſs*; multiplying her *Fornications*; and inſtead of bringing forth and cheriſhing a *faithful Seed* to the Redeemer, breathes out horrid Threatnings and Perſecutions

* *Heath* and *Day*, the Biſhops of *Worceſter* and *Chicheſter*, were deprived of their Biſhoprics by a Court of Delegates, who were all *Laymen*. Vid. *Echard's* Hiſt. Eng. page 310.

ſecutions againſt them, *makes War with the Saints*, deſtroys them from the Earth, and is *drunk with their Blood*; that the Papacy or *Church of Rome* is *thus* deſcribed by the HOLY GHOST, Proteſtant Divines, and even thoſe of the Church of *England*, readily confeſs. How aſtoniſhing then to ſee! That from this idolatrous apoſtate *Church* you derive, by ORDINATION, your *ſpiritual* and *ſacerdotal* Powers; and boaſt that you can trace from her by an *uninterrupted Line* your eccleſiaſtical Deſcent. Strange! that without Shame you declare yourſelves before the World the Offspring of this *filthy withered old* HARLOT, as your Church expreſly calls her; and that the Validity of your *Ordinations* and holy Offices in CHRIST's *Church*, you reſt upon their Tranſmiſſion to you from this *antichriſtian* and *falſe* Church, even at the very time that you acknowledge *that for a* THOUSAND *Years paſt it has been ſo far from having the Nature of the* TRUE CHURCH *that* NOTHING CAN BE MORE.——What Miracles are here! That which is no *true Church*, nor has been *any thing like* it for a *thouſand* Years paſt; yet conveys true, regular, Church-Offices and Powers! An *anti-apoſtolic* Church imparting genuine *apoſtolic* Orders! The *Synagogue of Satan* become the *ſacred Repoſitory*, where the Power of *Ordination* to holy Offices in CHRIST's Church, for more than *ten Centuries* principally reſted, and was almoſt only to be found! The *Church of Rome*, which by Apoſtacy hath *cut itſelf off* from the *Body of* CHRIST, hath nevertheleſs his *Spirit* and *Authority* dwelling in it; and is *commiſſioned* by CHRIST to examine, ordain and ſend Miniſters into his Church, for the edifying of his Body and perfecting his Saints! How in every View marvellous and tranſcendent is this?

" But *Harlot* as ſhe is, you ſay, ſhe may *bring* " *forth Children* as well as a virtuous Matron, and " ſometimes Children far better than herſelf*."

* II. Def. p. 52.

Poor Conſolation this! For the *Children* ſhe brings forth in this State of her Divorcement muſt be *born of Fornication*, a ſpurious and corrupt Race.

This, Sir, is that Church of *Rome* whom you own as *your* MOTHER, and from whom you claim by *Ordination* to be eccleſiaſtically ſprung; and the *Sons* of this vile and deteſtible *Proſtitute* you acknowledge as your *Brethren*; duly born into the Church; ordained, becauſe *epiſcopally*, in a valid and right Manner; whereas the glorious Company of foreign *reformed* Churches, together with the Church of *Scotland* and the *Diſſenting Miniſters* at home, you utterly diſown as *eccleſiaſtical* Brethren; and affirm, "*That having renounced* EPISCOPACY, "*and their Ordination being irregular, their Commu-*"*nion can be neither lawful nor ſafe.*" Where, alas! is the Decency, the Conſiſtency and Common Senſe; to ſay nothing of the Chriſtianity or Charity of this!

The Church of *Rome*, by the XIXth Article of the Church of *England*, cannot poſſibly be a Part of the true viſible Church of CHRIST; for this it thus defines,——*A Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of GOD is preached, and the Sacraments be duly adminiſtred according to Chriſt's Ordinance, in all thoſe things that of Neceſſity are requiſite to the ſame.* But, do you not acknowledge that the *pure Word of GOD* is ſo far from being preached in the *Romiſh* Church, that 'tis there corrupted by moſt erroneous and abominable Traditions, idolatrous Rites and *blaſphemous Fables*, as your XXXIſt Article moſt righteouſly ſtiles them? Do you not confeſs *the Wine* to be an eſſential Part of the Lord's-Supper? Is that Sacrament then *duly miniſtred, according to Chriſt's Ordinance* in the Church where *the Cup* is taken from the People?

In ſhort, "If Blaſphemies againſt GOD and "Tyranny over Men; if defacing the Ideas of "*Deity*, and corrupting the Principles of moral "*Honeſty* and *Virtue*; if ſubverting the Founda-

"tions

" tions of natural Religion, and acting directly " counter to the Spirit and Design, and overthrowing the essential Articles of the Christian Faith; " if the most avowed and bold Affronts offered to " Heaven, and the bloodiest and most brutal Outrages executed on the best of Men; if all these, " I say, are sufficient to exclude Men from being a " Part of the truely catholic apostolic Church, the " Romanists can certainly have no Pretences to it."

The Church of *Rome* then having by her abominable Immoralities, Blasphemies and Idolatries, *excommunicated* and cut herself off from the Body of Christ, she cannot have his *Spirit* and *Power* dwelling in her; consequently, has no Authority to convey *sacerdotal* Characters and Offices in *Christ*'s Church; the Characters and Offices therefore which she pretends to convey, are spurious and of no Validity or Efficacy therein.

But what finishes the Absurdity, and renders it quite *astonishing*, is,—— That these very *Popish Clergy*, to whose ORDERS you pay such extravagant Complaisance, are so unpolite as not to return the Compliment to *yours:* No, so far from it, that they rudely pronounce *you* ALL, from the greatest *Archbishop* to the meanest *Clerk* in the Land, a Company of mere common unconsecrated *Laymen*; as unqualified for performing any *holy Office* in the Christian Church as the most illiterate and contemptible Dissenter of us all. To return Good for Evil is, indeed, sometimes truly great. But to see the venerable Bench of Bishops and Governors of this Church, with the whole Body of its Clergy, not only *yielding*, but *contending* before the World for, the Validity and Efficacy of the Orders of POPISH *Priests*; when at the same time these very *Priests* are going up and down the Kingdom undermining their Authority, invalidating their Ministrations, and representing *their* sacerdotal Powers as a mere Nullity and Jest.——To see them publickly maintaining

taining the *eccleſiaſtic* Characters and Office of theſe Corrupters of Chriſtianity, theſe ſworn Enemies to our civil Government and to his Majeſty King *George*, theſe crafty Seducers, who are gone out ſpreading Treaſon, Idolatry, Superſtition and deſtructive Error through the Land,——this is ſuch a Strain of Courteſy as no Reaſon can juſtify; yea, is ſuch a Strain of Weakneſs and Impolicy as ought not to be beheld without indignant Concern. For this gives theſe *Popiſh Emiſſaries* a moſt dangerous Advantage over you: they artfully tell their Proſelytes, "That *you* acknowledge the Truth and Validity "of *their* Orders; whilſt *they* utterly deny the Va- "lidity of *yours*; the only SAFE *and* SURE way "therefore is to ſtick to *their* Miniſtrations; which, "yourſelves being Judges, are *authentic* and *valid*; "whereas there is, at leaſt a *Riſque*, a *Danger* at- "tending yours;" and, "*that the People cannot* "(to uſe your own Words) *depend with ſo much Aſ-* "*ſurance as is requiſite to the Peace and Acquieſcence* "*of their Mind, that* SUCH ORDINATIONS *will be* "*bleſſed to them, and that they are pleaſing to* GOD." Thus they uncourteouſly turn the Weapons againſt you which you put into their Hands; and whilſt you are juſtifying *their* Orders, make uſe of thoſe *very Orders* to poiſon and pervert the People; and craftily to traduce, undermine and deſtroy your Church.

"The *great Bleſſing* of EPISCOPAL *Ordination* is "wanting to the foreign Churches, you affirm, "rather through NECESSITY than *Choice* *." This is perfectly romantic, and has not the Face of Probability. Does not the World know, that in their public Confeſſions and Formularies of Faith, *Biſhops* and *Prieſts* are declared originally *the ſame*, and that the

* II. Def. p. 50.

the Power of *Ordination* belongs equally to both * ? Can any thing be more manifeſt than that *epiſcopal* Ordination, if choſen and deſired by them, like other *Britiſh Manufactures*, might with all imaginable Eaſe be in a few Days exported to them, and ſpread in a few Months through all their Provinces and Towns? Are there not in this Kingdom thouſands of *Eccleſiaſtics*, who, receiving it from our *Biſhops*, would moſt joyfully carry over this *great Bleſſing* to foreign Churches? Or ſhould any of their *Divines* come over to fetch it, would they not be received, think you, with Extaſies of Welcome; and return loaded with *Honours*; perhaps, with Favours more *ſolid* and *ſubſtantial* than theſe? Has there no Management or Addreſs been uſed thro' a Century paſt, to introduce into their Churches this *epiſcopal* Grace? And as to its "*ſuiting the Conſtitution and Frame of their civil Governments*," nothing, you know, can better fit thoſe of the *Lutheran* Profeſſion, who have *nominal* Biſhops, tho' no *Ordination* but PRESBYTERIAN amongſt them—. To aſſert then, "*that the foreign Churches do really* "PREFER, DESIRE *and ſome of them* SIGH *for* "EPISCOPAL ORDINATION; *and that it is not of* "CHOICE *but of* NECESSITY *they want it*—," appears to me to be mere *Romance*; an Aſſertion far from doing Honour to the Perſon that makes it.

There is one Conſideration more, upon this Head of *Ordination*, which I beg leave to mention; the rather, becauſe there hath not generally, I think, that Streſs been laid upon it which its Importance deſerves: Which is,

5. Sup-

* Mr. *Du Pleſis* (ſays Biſhop *Jer. Taylor*) a Man of Honour and great Learning, atteſts, that at the firſt Reformation there were many Archbiſhops and Cardinals in *Germany*, *France*, *Italy*, *&c.* who joined in the Reformation, whom they might, but did not, employ in their Ordinations; and therefore, ſays the Biſhop, what *Neceſſity* can be pretended in this Caſe I would fain learn? *Epiſc. aſſerted, &c.* page 191.

5. Supposing the *Power of* ORDINATION to be, from Scripture, ever so clearly proved to belong *solely* to *Bishops*; yet all the Bishops of this Realm refusing to ordain but upon *unjustifiable Terms*; ORDINATION, in this Case, may justly be sought from *Presbyters*; and, when given by *them*, is of undoubted *Validity* and *Regularity* in the Christian Church.

The *Bishops* require from all Candidates for Ordination, as an *indispensible* Term of receiving it from them——*That they subscribe willingly, and* ex animo *to the* XXXIX *Articles, that they are* ALL *and* EVERY ONE *of them agreeable to the Word of* GOD: *And that they solemnly declare their* UNFEIGNED *Assent and Consent to* ALL *and* EVERY THING *contained in and prescribed by the Book of* COMMON-PRAYER. This now is *a Term* of Admission to the *Christian Ministry*, which they have *no Authority* from CHRIST to insist upon or to make; yea, *a Term* (if with Humility I might say it) which they *offend* greatly against the *Rights* and *Liberty* of the Christian Church, and against CHRIST its only Head, by presuming to make; because, thousands may be *duely* qualified, according to the *Will of* CHRIST, to act as Ministers in *his* Church, who cannot with a good Conscience comply with *this Term.* By insisting therefore on it, they *reject* those whom CHRIST *receives*; and *unlawfully* keep out Numbers of worthy Persons from a Part in the Christian *Ministry*, who, by the Appointment and Will of GOD, and by the Constitution of the *Christian* Church, have a *Right* of Admission to it; and whose Ministry is greatly needed and would be useful therein.

Let the *sole Power* of Ordination, then, be allowed to have been *originally* lodged in the *Bishops*; yet, if at any Time they should enter into a Combination to *abuse* and *pervert* this Power; to lay a Yoke upon Christian *Ministers* which CHRIST never laid upon them, and which they *ought not* to bear;

and

and *Ordination* cannot be had from THEM upon *honourable* and *Chriſtian* Terms; in *this* we may ſafely reaſon, as our Lord hath taught us in a *like* Caſe, *that* GOD *will have Mercy and not ſacrifice*; that a mere *Ceremony* is to give Way to Conſiderations of a *moral* Nature; and that Men, in other Reſpects well qualified, when their Service is needed (of which *themſelves* and the *People* are to be Judges) may act as *Miniſters* in the Church of *Chriſt*; either without any *Ordination*, when it cannot *honourably* be had; or with ſuch only, whether *Preſbyterian* or *Popular*, as can be obtained upon *honourable* Terms.

Theſe things I recommend, Sir, to your diſpaſſionate and ſober Thoughts; not doubting but they will diſpoſe you to be leſs ſevere upon *Preſbyterian*, and more Modeſt in your glorying on *epiſcopal* Ordination, than you have formerly been.——And whether thoſe who now claim the *ſole* Power of Ordination, and conſider it as *a* TRUST committed to them by CHRIST, can juſtify their *refuſing it*, but upon Compliance with ſuch *ſevere* and *unreaſonable* Terms,——deſerves maturely to be weighed; conſidering, that (as far as they bear any Relation to *Chriſt*) they are not LORDS, but only *Servants* in his Houſe, and that to HIM they muſt be *accountable* for ſo important a TRUST.

SECT. X.

Of the Peoples Right to CHUSE *their own Paſtors.*

THE next Point to be conſidered, is the Right of the Chriſtian *Laity* to chuſe their own Miniſters. The Charge given them in Scripture *to try the Spirits*,——*to beware of falſe Prophets*,——*to take Heed of what they hear*, " you own, inconteſti-" bly proves their *Right of Judgment*, or of exa-" mining and proving Doctrines; but the thing " you want to ſee is, how from the *Right of Judg-*

" *ment*, the *Right of Choice* can be deduced?*" But can a Perſon of any Diſcernment want to be ſhewn this? Does not the Right of JUDGING in things of Religion, neceſſarily imply not only a *Right*, but a *Duty* alſo, of ACTING agreeable to *that Judgment*; or in other Words, a Right of *Choice?* Pray, why muſt a Man *examine?* What! that he may have, peradventure, the Guilt and Mortification of *combating* his own Conſcience, and acting *contrary* to his Senſe of Things? What Abſurdity were this! If the Chriſtian *Laity* were to *try the Spirits*, and to *examine* and *weigh* the Doctrine their pretended Paſtors brought; then *thoſe*, ſurely, whom they found to bring *not the Doctrine* of CHRIST, and to be led by *not the Divine Spirit*, they were to reject, to turn away from, and not to accept as their *ſpiritual Guides.*

Accordingly, the *Chriſtian* LAITY are charged *Rom.* xvi. 17. *To mark* (σκοπειν to conſider, to obſerve carefully) *them that* CAUSE *Diviſions and Offences contrary to the Chriſtian Doctrine, and to* AVOID *them.* Note, thoſe who make NEW *Terms* of Communion in the Church of *Chriſt*; who ſet up NEW *Ceremonies* of human Invention, and command the Subjects of *Chriſt* to yield Obedience to them; and who *caſt out* of the Church, or *refuſe* to admit into it, thoſe who comply not with *ſuch* Ceremonies and Rites; THESE, Sir, are the Men (I appeal to your own Conſcience, and to the Bar of *eternal* REASON at which all muſt ſhortly ſtand) THESE are the Men which CAUSE *Diviſions and Offences contrary to the Chriſtian Doctrine*; THESE therefore, the Chriſtian People are expreſly *commanded*, by the Apoſtle, *to* AVOID. Attentively conſider this, and you will never more condemn our *Separation* from your Church; this ſingle Text alone juſtifies it before the World; and not only ſo, but proves it a moſt plain and indiſpenſible *Duty.*

The

* II. Def. page 57.

The Church of *England* seems to have *departed from*, and most manifestly to have *destroyed* the primitive Apostolic and Catholic COMMUNION, by setting up and enjoining OTHER Terms of *Christian* FELLOWSHIP than the GOSPEL hath injoined, and *rejecting* those whom CHRIST *receives*.——From *this*, therefore, upon *Christian* Principles, and by the Command of St. *Paul* we are to *withdraw* ourselves, and to *separate*.

But to return—The Manner in which the Place of *Judas*, the Traitor, was fitted up, *Acts* i. and in which the seven *Deacons* were chosen, *Acts* vi. shews it plainly to be the Constitution of the *great* FOUNDER of the Christian Church that its Ministers should be appointed by the *Election of the People*. An *Apostle* was an Officer of *extraordinary* Rank, whom it seemed in a peculiar Manner the Prerogative of CHRIST to appoint solely to that Office; but neither doth he *do this*, nor yet order the *Apostolic* College to fill up this Vacancy by their own Authority and Discretion; but (for an *Instruction*, no Doubt, to future Ages) he commanded the *Christian People* (the whole Number of Believers, as far as appears, that were then at *Jerusalem*) to *chuse out* TWO, and present them before him, of whom he would appoint *one* to the vacant Apostolate. A strong presumptive Evidence, every one must grant, in Support of *popular* Elections.

And when *seven Deacons* were to be appointed to manage the Church's Stock; though the *Apostles* were then vested with a *Fulness* of Power, and had the *Gift of* DISCERNING SPIRITS (in both which they have no *Successors*) and were therefore far better qualified to have *chosen* Persons for that Office than the Multitude of *Lay-Christians*; yet behold, as a standing Monument to after-times in whom this *elective Power* was to rest in the Church, they took not upon them authoritatively to *nominate*, but directed *the* PEOPLE *to look out seven Men of good Re-*

port. In Obedience to this Direction, and in Pursuance of their Right (as the Lord's *freed Men*; put into an happy State, where none were to have *Authority* or *Dominion* over others, but all were to be *Brethren*) the *whole Multitude*, 'tis said, *chose*, or, as you learnedly render it, PICKED OUT *of their Number seven Men.*——Not to differ on small things, Sir, if you allow the Christian *Laity* to PICK OUT their Ministers, as the *Apostles*, with their superior Powers and Gifts of *discerning Spirits*, allowed the *Laity* in their Times, this is all we crave.

As to the Practice of the *antient* Church, 'tis not I, as you suggest, but a Writer * of your own, high enough for *Church Power*, who says "*That the People* "*had Votes in the Choice of Bishops, all must grant,* "*and it can be only* IGNORANCE *and* FOLLY *that* "*pleads the contrary.*" I own, I am surprized at your contesting stiffly this Point, when the Stream of all, even your own Writers, beats so violently against you. *Clemens Romanus* † a Cotemporary of the Apostles, says, they appointed Bishops, συνευδοκησάσης της εκκλησιάς πάσης, *by the Consent of the whole Church.* How often does *Cyprian* say, "Nihil fiat nisi consentiente plebe," *Let nothing be done but by the Consent of the People.* Again, "Deus instruit ordina-"tiones sacerdotales non nisi sub populi assistentis "conscientia fieri oportere ‡," GOD *appoints that sacerdotal* ORDINATIONS *should not be made without the Assistance and Consent of the People.* Himself he declares *chosen* to his Office, "Favore plebis, populi "suffragio," *by the Favour and Vote of the People.* Your Criticism on the Word *suffragium* (which all the Learned know properly and constantly signifies a *Vote*; as it undoubtedly does in *one* if not *both* the very Instances you bring to disprove it) is too slender to deserve a particular Consideration; especially as you offer not a Word against that other express Testimony quoted from the same Father, which indisputably

* Lowth. † Epist. ad Cor. Cap. 44. ‡ Epist. 67.

diſputably ſhews the Senſe in which he uſes, *ſuffragium*, " Plebs maximam habet poteſtatem vel eli-" gendi dignos ſacerdotes vel indignos recuſandi," *To the* PEOPLE *belongs the* CHIEF POWER *either of chuſing worthy Miniſters or of rejecting the unworthy.* This is a Teſtimony full to the Point, which you could not *gainſay*, and therefore wiſely *overlook* it.

The *Conſtitutions* of the Apoſtles decree, *That he who is to be ordained a Biſhop muſt be* CHOSEN *by all* THE PEOPLE *as the moſt worthy* *.

The *Canons* called the Apoſtles *depoſe ſuch Biſhops as are choſen by the Civil Magiſtrate* †.

The famous Council of *Nice*, in a ſynodical Epiſtle to the Church of *Alexandria* forbid *any to be ordained Biſhops without the* ELECTION *of the People.*

The Council of *Conſtantinople*, anno 382, ſay they ordained *Nectarius*, cuncta decernente civitate, *all the City decreeing it*; and *Flavianus*, omni Eccleſia decernente, *according to the Determination of the whole Church.*

The Council of *Carthage*, anno 394, ſay *a Biſhop is to be ordained*, cum omni conſenſu Clericorum & Laicorum, *with the univerſal* CONSENT *both of the Clergy and* LAIETY.

Leo V. Father *Paul* ‡ confeſſes, has amply ſhewn, " that the Ordination of a Biſhop could not be " *lawful* or *valid*, which was not required and " ſought by the PEOPLE, and by them approved; " which is ſaid by all the Fathers of thoſe Times;" and adds, Qui præfuturus eſt omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur §, *Let him that is to preſide over all, be choſen by all.*

The Council of *Paris*, anno 552, require *the* ELECTION *of the* PEOPLE *and Clergy, on Pain of Excommunication. Chryſoſtom* was choſen Biſhop of *Conſtantinople* by the *common Conſent of all Perſons, Clergy*

* Conſt. Apoſ. L. 8. Cap. 4. † Can. Apoſ. 30, in Photio. ‡ Benef. Mat. Sect, 29. § Leon. Ep. 89, Cap. 5.

Clergy as well as LAITY *. In the Choice of St. *Martin*, the Votes of the *People* carried it againſt the Votes of the *Biſhops* themſelves, the *People inſiſting upon their Privilege* †.

Finally; the mighty Conteſts and Struggles, of which eccleſiaſtical Story is full, into which the great Cities frequently fell at the *Election* of their Biſhops, put beyond all Doubt the *Antiquity* of the Practice. That at *Antioch* when *Euſtathius* was choſen, deſcribed by *Euſebius* (de vita Conſtant. L. 3. Ch. 59, 60.) where alſo is the *Emperor's* Letter to the People of *Antioch* (another memorable Monument full to the Purpoſe) exhorting them *not to* CHUSE *Euſebius* as their Biſhop, but to think of ſome other Perſon.——That at *Cæſarea* deſcribed by *Greg. Nazian.* ‡——That at *Alexandria* by *Evagrius* §.——That at *Conſtantinople*, ſeveral Times, by *Sozomen*, *&c.*——That at *Epheſus* by *Chryſoſtom.*——At *Verſeiles* by *Ambroſe.*——At *Milan* by *Socrates.*——At *Rome* by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *&c.*——It hence evidently appears what the Sentiments and Practice were of the *Churches* in theſe *antient* Times. So that ſo warm a Champion for Church-Authority as your zealous Dr. *Wall* is forced to confeſs, "that it is a Piece of Hiſtory which "cannot fairly be denied, that amongſt the *primi*-"*tive* Chriſtians *the People* uſed to have their SUF-"FRAGE in the *Choice* of Church-Officers; and "that this is the moſt *regular* Way; that it con-"tinued *many Years*; and thoſe Chriſtians who "have gone about to mend this Way, have made "it worſe ‖."

Theſe,

* Socrat. Schol. L. 6. Ch. 2. † Sculp. Sev. Cap. 7.
‡ Orat. 19. § L. 2. C. 6.
‖ Dr. Wall's Hiſt. Inf. Bap. Vol. II. page 334. Nay, if any *Preſbyter* was created a *Biſhop* by imperial Mandates, the People were enjoined to renounce him.

Theſe, now, are the Grounds on which this *Right* of the People ſtands. And thus *impregnable* is the Poſt you ſo adventrouſly attack. Your reaſoning upon this Head is truly extraordinary; which in ſhort is this,——" A Man does well who " meekly attends the Miniſtry of a good, able, or- " thodox Miniſter, by *whomſoever* provided; but " the *King*, *Biſhops*, *Lord Chancellor*, *Gentry*, *&c.* " are MORE COMPETENT *Judges* of the Goodneſs " and Orthodoxy of Clergymen than the common " People* ;" therefore, the People ought not to judge for themſelves in theſe Matters, but to ſubmit meekly to the Determination of the *King*, *Lord Chancellor*, *Biſhops*, *&c.* A moſt excellent Doctrine! admirably fit to promote Popery in *Spain*, Mahometiſm in *Turkey*, Paganiſm in *Japan*. The brave Proteſtants in *France* then, I urged, have *unwarrantably* and *wickedly* withdrawn from the *Miniſters* which the King and Biſhops had ſet over them: " Yes, you reply, undoubtedly they have, if their " Kings and Biſhops ſet over them, as they do here, " good orthodox Miniſters " But could you think, Sir, ſuch an Anſwer would be received without a Smile? Pray, WHO *is to judge* of the Goodneſs, Ability, and Orthodoxy of the Miniſter? Not *the People* themſelves, according to your Scheme, but the *King* and *Biſhops*, who are MORE COMPETENT JUDGES. Well then, the Rulers in *France* are *more competent* Judges of the Goodneſs, Ability, and Orthodoxy of Miniſters than their *Huguenot* Subjects; to their *ſuperior* Judgments, therefore, they ought to ſubmit.——What rare *Chriſtianity* and *Proteſtaniſm* this! But are the *Huguenots* in *France*, I beſeech you, *more competent* Judges of the Ability of the Clergy, on whom *they* ought to attend, than the People of *England?* Or have the King and Biſhops *here* MORE AUTHORITY from GOD to judge for their Subjects,

* II. Let. page 9. II. Def. page 63.

Subjects, than the King and Bishops *there?* 'Tis strange a Gentleman of Discernment can entangle himself in so inconsistent a Scheme.

" That the *Minority* of a Parish are bound to sub-
" mit to the Choice of the *Majority*; so if *these* hap-
" pen to chuse a *Popish Priest* for their Pastor, *those*
" are obliged to receive him as such," is an Absurdity you would charge upon my *Principles* and *Reasoning* *, but is really nothing, Sir, but the Production of your own Imagination; there being not a Syllable in my Letter favouring such Submission; but it expressly claims and maintains the *Right of* EVERY MAN *to judge and chuse for himself.*

SECT. XI.

The BURIAL OFFICE *and* ATHANASIAN CREED *most apparently inconsistent and repugnant to each other.*

WITH what Truth, Sir, and Justice you drew your own Character *as a sorry Advocate for the Church*——†, the Public will judge; that you have shewn no Defect of *Courage*, every one must own. You proceed in what you call, your *soldierly Manner* ‡, and like a bold and intrepid Champion undertake to defend what, I believe, few except *yourself* but would desert as a quite forlorn and untenable Post: And that is, your Church's *thirteen* Times a Year most solemnly *pronouncing* concerning ALL *Arians* and *Socinians* that they CANNOT *be saved, that they do* WITHOUT DOUBT *perish everlastingly*; and yet, with equal Solemnity, pronouncing concerning these SELF SAME *Persons*, dying in their Heresies, that GOD *has* in GREAT MERCY *taken them to himself*, and that *you* HOPE *they* REST IN CHRIST. This is such a *Contradiction*

* II. Def. page 63. † II. Def. page 128. ‡ Dedic. page 15.

tion as, I confeſs, I did not expect any Gentleman of *Sobriety*, would attempt to reconcile. But let us hear how you perform.——" When we declare " that *Arians* and *Socinians* periſh everlaſtingly, our " Senſe is, that their *Hereſies* are damnable, and " that they upon the Account of them are liable to " Damnation; notwithſtanding which, there may " be Room for Pardon in particular Caſes, and that, " when *one* of theſe comes to die, it may be charitably hoped, that *his* is ſuch a Caſe, and we may " lawfully declare, that we do not *quite deſpair* concerning him *:" That is to ſay, you damn the *Hereſie*, but ſave the *Heretic:* A Piece of ſpiritual Legerdemain, which, I own, I cannot comprehend. But does not all the World ſee, Sir, that the *Creed* plainly and inconteſtibly refers to PERSONS, not to *Things* only; and abſolutely pronounces upon THEIR *final Circumſtances or State?* WHOSOEVER *will be ſaved, 'tis neceſſary before all Things that* HE *hold the Faith* there defined; *which Faith, except* EVERY ONE *doth keep whole and undefiled,* HE *ſhall without Doubt periſh everlaſtingly.*——Does this ſpeak only of the *Hereſie*, will you ſay, and not expreſly pronounce upon *the* CONDITION or STATE of the *Perſon* who holds it? And does it only ſay of *him*, that he is *liable to Damnation*, and not that he ſhall *without Doubt*, or moſt certainly, *be damned?*

Again, does the Creed leave Room *to hope in particular Caſes*, when, at *five* diſtinct Places, it determines abſolutely *againſt Hope*; and in ſuch ſtrong and expreſs Language, as moſt evidently reaches, and was intended to reach, to *every particular Caſe?* WHOSOEVER,—EVERY ONE,—*which except a* MAN *believe,*—HE *ſhall* WITHOUT DOUBT, *periſh everlaſtingly.* If, notwithſtanding theſe *deciſive* and moſt *peremptory* Declarations, the *Creed* ſtill leaves *Room to hope* for the Salvation of the *avowed Deniers* and *Oppugners* of this Faith; then the Uſe of Language

* II. Def. page 151.

is loſt, there is no Meaning in Words, *Truth* and *Falſhood* are the ſame, and a Man may honeſtly ſubſcribe the *Koran* of *Mahomet* and reconcile it with a Profeſſion of the *Goſpel of* CHRIST. Beſides, what contemptible Chicanery and trifling is it to talk, "*of* "*Room for Pardon and Hope in* PARTICULAR *Ca-* "*ſes*," when you declare ſolemnly *this Hope* UNIVERSALLY, and in EVERY *Caſe*, and to ſay,—— "*When* ONE *of theſe comes to die*;" when you do it over ALL when they come to die: And, "that "you do not *quite deſpair concerning the Man*;" when you have the Aſſurance to *thank* GOD *that he hath in* GREAT MERCY *taken him to himſelf*, and to pray him, *that when you die*, YOURSELF *may reſt in* CHRIST, *as you hope this* ARIAN *or* SOCINIAN *doth*. Is this the Language of NOT-QUITE-DESPAIR?—— Such trifling does but hurt a Cauſe: You had much better have done here, as with the *burial Office* and the *Abſolution*, have paſſed it in Silence over, and not attempted to defend what every one ſees to be incapable of Defence.

But, the *unfeigned* ASSENT *and* CONSENT which you have ſolemnly given, and which every *Clergyman* is obliged moſt ſolemnly to give, ſticks, no Doubt, greatly; and makes you ſtrain every Nerve to endeavour to let it paſs. Such Potions, indeed, muſt be *bitter*; GOD grant they be not *malignant!* There is *ſomething* in every wiſe Man that muſt ſtrongly keck againſt them. To Numbers in your own Church it cannot but be difficult, in GOD's *Preſence* and before his Church, before *Angels* and *Men*, to give their *unfeigned* ASSENT *and* CONSENT to ALL and EVERY *thing* contained in the *Athanaſian Creed*, with all its Explications, Limitations, and damnatory Clauſes.——A *Creed*, whoſe Limitations they *condemn*; whoſe Explications they *deride*; and whoſe damnatory Clauſes they *deteſt* heartily and *abhor*;——yet in GOD's *Preſence* and before *his Church*, I repeat it with Aſtoniſhment! to declare

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ones *unfeigned* ASSENT *and* CONSENT to them ALL, ——is a Potion, ſurely, which though ſweetened with the nobleſt Church-preferments, a Man might juſtly dread to ſwallow! You wonder, Sir, perhaps, to ſee *Deiſm*, *Infidelity*, *Popery*, a *Corruption* of Manners and *Contempt* of holy Things prevail throughout the Land? I acknowledge, I do not: For when thoſe who are to be the great *Examples* and *Teachers* of RIGHTEOUSNESS, too generally enter upon their ſacred Office with a dangerous Violation of it; ſubſcribing Articles they do not believe; preaching contrary to their Subſcriptions; declaring ſolemnly their unfeigned Aſſent to what they do not approve, but, it may be, heartily deteſt; and proſtituting the holy Rites and Offices of their Religion to *political* and *ſordid* Ends. —— Why ſhould it be thought ſtrange if POPERY and INFIDELITY greatly gain Ground? and what wonder if they at length fatally prevail? *

SECT. XII.

The Scottiſh *Preſbyterian* ESTABLISHMENT *vindicated.*

IF SCHISM be ſo *dangerous* and *damnable* a Thing as you affect to repreſent †; the River *Tweed*, methinks

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* See a like manifeſt *inconſiſtence* betwixt the XXVth *Article*, and the Office for *Confirmation*. The *Article* ſays—"*Confirmation* has not any viſible *Sign* or *Ceremony* ordained of GOD" ——But the *Office* commands the Biſhop to declare, "That he "hath *laid his Hands* on the confirmed (after the Example of "the holy Apoſtles) to certify them by *this Sign* of GOD's "Favour"——Behold an evident *Contrariety!* But to both Parts unfeigned *Aſſent* and *Conſent* is obſequiouſly given!

It is ſomething (more than) odd, a learned Biſhop of your own has lately obſerved, to have *two Creeds* eſtabliſhed in the *ſame Church*; in one of which, thoſe are declared *accurſed*, who deny *the Son to be of the* SAME *Hypoſtaſis with the Father*: And in the other, it is declared they *cannot be ſaved*, but *periſh everlaſtingly*, who do not aſſert *that there is* ONE *Hypoſtaſis of the Father and* ANOTHER *of the Son*——Eſſay on Spirit. §. 146.

† II. Def p. 63.

methinks, ſhould not bound it, nor your ſolemn Warnings againſt it *; but from the Profuſion of your Charity to the *Engliſh* Diſſenters †, a little ſhould extend alſo to your *epiſcopal* Brethren the *Diſſenters* from the *Scottiſh* Church. But *theſe*, ſuch is your partiality, you endeavour to juſtify inſtead of cenſuring; yea, to juſtify upon ſuch Principles as certainly expoſe yourſelf to heavy Cenſure and Rebuke. You alledge,—— "That *they* did not "ſeparate from the *Preſbyterians*, but the *Preſby-* "*terians* from *them*,——that by Tumults, falſe "Muſters, and other Miſrepreſentations of Perſons "and Things the *Preſbyterians* got themſelves eſta- "bliſhed,——but that having *renounced* EPISCO- "PACY, and their Ordination being irregular, "their COMMUNION can be neither *Safe* nor *Law-* "*ful* ‡." Behold! in theſe laſt Words that *ſchiſ- matical dividing* Spirit from which you endeavour to vindicate your Church. A ſevere and unchriſtian Sentence! by which you *unchurch* at once, and cut off from Chriſtian *Fellowſhip* all the foreign *reformed* Churches, a glorious and great Company, and pro- nounce them not to belong to the viſible *Church of* CHRIST. *They all have renounced* EPISCOPACY, in your Senſe of the Word, *their* ORDINATIONS there- fore you declare *irregular*, being only Preſbyterian, *and their* COMMUNION *to be neither* SAFE *nor* LAW- FUL, *i. e.* it is a *dangerous* and *wicked* thing to hold Communion with them: Your own ſober Thoughts, Sir, and the *epiſcopal* Authority under which you are placed, will, I doubt not, correct you for ſo im- modeſt a Cenſure. To aſſiſt the former in this good Office, I would offer *two* things to your ſeri- ous Review.

1. That the very *Canons* of the Church of *Eng- land*, to which you have ſworn Obedience, acknow- ledge the Church of *Scotland* to be a true Siſter Church;

* Ibid. page 128. † Dedic. page 15. ‡ II. Def. pages 16, 145.

Church; commanding all its *Clergy* to pray *for the Churches* of ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, *and* IRELAND *as Parts of* CHRIST's *holy* CATHOLIC CHURCH, *which is diſperſed throughout the World. Canon* LV. *Note*, the Church of *Scotland*, when theſe *Canons* were made, was *Preſbyterian* as it is now. And,

2. Conſider, that the *Preſbyterian* Church in *North Britain* is eſtabliſhed by the *very ſame Authority*, and reſts upon the *ſame Law* as the *epiſcopal* Church in *South Britain*.

The very ſame *Legiſlative Powers* which eſtabliſhed and formed the *one*, have eſtabliſhed the *other* likewiſe; if it be Schiſm, then, Rebellion and Contumacy againſt GOVERNORS *to ſeparate* from the latter; it is moſt certainly the very ſame to *ſeparate* from the former alſo. As for "*Tumults and falſe* "*Muſters by which it got itſelf eſtabliſhed.*" You ſhould have known, that the Senſe of the *Scottiſh* Nation was, perhaps, ten times more general for *Preſbyterianiſm*, in the Reigns of K *William* and Q. *Ann*, when that Form was eſtabliſhed there; than the Senſe of the *Engliſh* Nation was for *Proteſtantiſm*, in the Reigns of K. *Edward* and Q. *Elizabeth*, when the *epiſcopal* Church of *England* was formed and eſtabliſhed here. But if the Settlement of PROTESTANTISM in *England*, by the Crown and Parliament of theſe Realms, was *valid* and *right*, even though the Biſhops and Clergy were, almoſt *unanimouſly* againſt it; PRESBYTERIANISM in *Scotland* ſurely, enacted and eſtabliſhed by the ſame Crown and Parliament, muſt be equally *valid*; eſpecially as the Voice of their *Clergy* as well as *Laiety* ran, not only violently, but generally that Way.

A grand CONVENTION *of the States* in *Scotland*, at the *Revolution*, in a Claim of Rights which they preſented as containing the *fundamental* and *unalterable* Laws of that Kingdom, declare,—— "*That* "*the Reformation in* SCOTLAND *having been begun* "*by a* PARTY *among the Clergy, all* PRELACY *in that*

" *that Church was a great and insupportable Grievance* " *to that Kingdom.*" King *William*, however, Bishop *Burnet* * informs us, " assured the *episcopal* " Party there, that he would do all that he could to " preserve them (established) granting a full Toleration to the *Presbyterians*, provided they concurred in the new Settlement of the Kingdom *(i. e.* " in renouncing King *James*, and owning himself " as their *Sovereign.)* But the *Bishops* and their Followers resolved to adhere firmly to the Interests " of King *James*, and so declaring in a Body, with " much Zeal, in Opposition to the new Settlement, " it was not possible for the King to preserve that " (episcopal) Government there, all those who expressed their Zeal for him, being equally zealous " against that Order."

This Establishment of *Presbytery* was again in the most solemn Manner *enacted* and *confirmed* by the Queen (*Ann*) and Parliament of *England* when the UNION was made. You speak therefore of this Affair, Sir, in more coarse and disrespectful Language than is either *decent* or *true*, when you talk of *Insurrections*, *false Musters*, *Misrepresentations*, *&c.* It was done upon the most *mature* and *grave* Deliberations both of King *William* and Queen *Ann*, and of the *Lords* and *Commons* of both Kingdoms in Parliament assembled; it has received the most sacred Sanction a haman Law can receive; and is made as *essential* and *fundamental* a Part of our present *Constitution*, as the Church of *England* itself. Take heed therefore that you are not preparing a Rod for your own Correction; and lest by teaching Men to argue away the Legality and Reverence of the *Presbyterian* Establishment in *North Britain*, you give a second mortal Stab † to the Church established here. You may please to observe also, that when you call the episcopal Dissenters there the *Church*

* Hist. of his Times, Vol. IV. pages 42, 43, duodecimo.

† A deadly one you before gave. See page 7.

Church of Scotland, 'tis with juſt the ſame Propriety, Decency and good Senſe, as if the Preſbyterians ſhould call themſelves the *Church of England* here.

Hence alſo it appears, that what you offer in Mitigation of the *Jacobitiſm* and *Rebellion* of the *Epiſcopalians* in *Scotland* (pages 16, 17,) has one material Flaw, which is, that it is not *founded upon* TRUTH. For you repreſent the Loſs of their Eſtabliſhment as being the Cauſe of their Diſaffection; whereas, the *very* REVERSE is exactly the Caſe; and they *therefore* loſt their Eſtabliſhment. becauſe they were diſaffected, rejected the *Revolution*, and adhere ſtaunchly to King *James*. King *William* would have preſerved them, if they would have acknowledged his Government; they obſtinately refuſed, and fell therefore a juſt Sacrifice to their ſtupid Attachment to a *tyrannical* and *Popiſh* Prince.

As to the preſent Loyalty of the two Parties in that Kingdom, the *Preſbyterians* and *Epiſcopalians*, which you have drawn into Compariſon you have done one of them great wrong in repreſenting them *both* as, perhaps, *alike deeply engaged* * in the late impious Rebellion there. If from the Diſpoſition of the *Clergy*, that of the *Laiety* may be reaſonably preſumed, there are *two* important Facts, to omit many other, which will diſpoſe every impartial Perſon, I believe, to view that Affair in a very different Light. One is, the ROYAL *Commander*, the Duke of *Cumberland*'s Letter to the *General Aſſembly* at *Edinburgh*, in which he expreſſes a ſtrong Senſe "of the very ſteady and laudable Conduct "of the Clergy of that Church, through the whole "Courſe of that wicked and unnatural Rebellion; "and ſays, I owe it to them in Juſtice to teſtify "that upon all Occaſions I have received from "them Profeſſions of the moſt inviolable Attach-"ment to his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and

* II. Def. page 15.

" and have always found them ready and forward " to act in their ſeveral Stations in all ſuch Affairs " as they could be uſeful in, tho' often to their " own great hazard ——." Upon an impartial Account, the Balance, I believe, by every diſintereſted Perſon, will be found to ſtand thus,—— Of the *Preſbyterian* eſtabliſhed *Clergy* not one in fifty in the whole Body, but wiſhed heartily Succeſs to the Arms of his Majeſty *King* GEORGE; of the *epiſcopal* Diſſenting *Clergy*, not one in fifty of the whole Body but wiſhed heartily Succeſs to the Arms of *Frenchmen*, *Italians*, and the miſcreant Crew who came to invade and overthrow our *Conſtitution* in Favour of an abjured and Popiſh Pretender.

The other Fact is, the Neceſſity which the *Legiſlature* have found themſelves under, by new Acts of Parliament, in two different Seſſions, more narrowly to watch, and to lay under freſh Reſtraints, the *epiſcopal* Churches in *Scotland*. Theſe are well known to be fruitful and fatal ſources of *Jacobitiſm* and *Diſaffection*; dangerous *Seminaries* where Men are formed and nouriſhed up in Allegiance to a *Popiſh Prince*, and in avowed Averſion and Diſloyalty to their rightful Sovereign *King* GEORGE:— Though it be too true then that there were ſome of the *Laiety* of the eſtabliſhed Church, by ſome occaſional Reſentment or unhappy Occurrence, hurried into that black Affair; they herein departed from their ſettled and profeſſed Principles; whereas the *Epiſcopalians* acted quite *in Character*, agreeable to the fixed Sentiments and Affections of their Party, when they prayed and fought heartily for the Deſtruction of our happy Government, and for the Advancement of a Popiſh Pretender to the Throne. To ſay then, " that the *Scottiſh Preſbyte-* " *rians*, were, perhaps, as *deeply engaged* in the late " odious Rebellion as the *epiſcopal Diſſenters* there," is to ſcatter Cenſures at random, to confront the plaineſt Evidence, and to repreſent them (as you have

have done abundantly by your Diſſenting Brethren here) in a very partial and injurious Light.

SECT. XIII.

Of the Church's AUTHORITY *in Controverſies of Faith.*

THIS is a *Claim*, which, to the Grief of its real Friends, and to the Triumph of its Foes, *your* CHURCH hath ſet up, and obliges all its Clergy ſolemnly to ſubſcribe. For it is really no other than an Invaſion of the DIVINE *Prerogative*; and, in the Language of the HOLY GHOST, *a ſitting in the Temple of* GOD, *ſhewing itſelf that it is* GOD *. It is a Claim of *Honour* as due to a Company of poor *frail and fallible* Men, which belongs *only* to the *omniſcient* and *infallible* GOD, and to CHRIST the *ſole* Lawgiver and King in the Church. It is the very *Root* of Antichriſtianiſm; the *Prop* upon which the whole Syſtem of Popery reſts; it came from the Church of *Rome*, and *thither* it directly leads; nor can the *Reformation* be ever juſtified, or the Church of *England* ſupported, upon the Foot of this Claim.

For if THE CHURCH *hath Authority in Controverſies of Faith*, the Church of *Rome*, ſurely, had it BEFORE the Church of *England*; yea, had it at the very Time when the *Reformation* was made. *Cranmer*, then, and *Ridley*, *Luther* and *Calvin* were guilty of great Petulancy and eccleſiaſtical Rebellion, in refuſing to ſubmit to *the* CHURCH's ſolemn Determinations concerning *Image-worſhip*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, *&c.* and in proudly ſetting up their own *private* Opinion againſt the *authoritative Deciſions* of their eccleſiaſtical SUPERIORS, *to whom they owed Submiſſion*, and *whom they ought to have obeyed*.——This Claim

* 2 Theſ. ii. 4.

of your Church, Sir, I say it again, is an *unanswerable* Argument in favour of *Popery*; which hath drawn thousands, no doubt, and is continually perverting Multitudes from *yours* to the Church of *Rome*. Nor can all the Learning or Wit of the whole Clergy of the Land withstand the Force of a single *Jesuit*, let him be armed with and wield skilfully this dangerous Weapon, the XXth *Article* of your Church.

It was the fatal Influence of this *Article*, I observed, that seduced King *James* II. and the great *Chillingworth* into the *Romish* Tents. These Instances you contest with me. But as to the *first*, are guilty of an unhappy Oversight, in confounding *two* Things, in the Quotation from *Burnet*'s History, and considering them as *one*, when they are most apparently *distinct*. The *Authority of the Church*, and the *Tradition from the Apostles in Support of Episcopacy*, are in the Bishops Account of King *James*'s Perversion most manifestly *two* several and different Things; whereas you would strangely have it thought, "that by the *Authority of the Church*, is "meant only, the *Authority of its Tradition or Testimony concerning Episcopacy* *." But do you not know, and did not the King know, that the *Authority of the Church* is one Thing, and its *Tradition in Support of Episcopacy* is another? Does not the Church, besides *this Tradition*, claim to itself moreover an *Authority in Controversies of Faith?* And did not the King wisely and rightly judge, "*that* "*there was more reason to submit to the* CATHOLIC "*Church, than to* ONE PARTICULAR *Church?*"—— That if the Church of *England* had this Authority, the Church of *Rome* had it long before her, and upon better Grounds than she; —— that if the Church of *England* by its Authority might solemnly determine that CHRIST *went down into Hell*, and that *Arians*

* II. Def. page 137.

Arians and *Socinians* are undoubtedly damned when they die, and periſh everlaſtingly, but yet, there is hope, when they die, that they *reſt in* CHRIST, and are *taken to* GOD *in mercy*; the Church of *Rome*, by the ſame Authority, might ſolemnly determine that *Images* are to be worſhipped, and that a *Piece of Bread* is tranſubſtantiated into the Body and Blood of CHRIST; there being nothing in the *one* at all more incredible or abſurd than in the *other?*— I own I ſee not but, upon this Principle, the King acted right; and that *every one* that believes this XXth *Article* of your Church ought to follow his Example, immediately forſake it, and go over to the Church of *Rome* *.

Thus did the renowned *Chillingworth*; he thought there was *a Neceſſity of an infallible living Judge of Controverſy*; or, *that there always was and muſt be ſome Church upon Earth that could not Err*, which in other Words is, *that had Authority in Controverſies of Faith*; finding therefore the Church of *Rome* claiming it with a better Grace, and upon fairer and ſtronger Grounds, than that of *England* could pretend, he too haſtily went over to it; though he afterward well atoned, by his incomparable Writings, for that precipitant Step. "But he was too great "a Maſter of Reaſon, you ſay, to take *Authority* for "the ſame Thing with *Infallibility*, under a dif- "ferent Expreſſion; and that, therefore our "Church, in claiming the former, did, in effect,

* In a Debate on a Bill againſt *Blaſphemy*, &c. brought into the Houſe of Lords, Anno 1721, the Earl of *Peterborough* frankly ſaid, tho' he was for a Parliamentary *King*, yet he did not deſire to have a Parliamentary GOD, or a Parliamentary *Religion:* And if the Houſe were for ſuch a one, he would *go to* ROME, and endeavour to be choſen *Cardinal*; for he had rather ſit in the *Conclave*, than with their Lordſhips, upon thoſe Terms. *Tindal's Hiſt. Eng.* Vol. IV. page 647.

Dr. *Will. Tindal* was alſo, by the ſame Principles, perverted to the Church of *Rome*. Vid. Second Defence of the Rights, &c. page 79.

" claim the latter *." However he took them, Sir, nothing is more plain than that they are undoubtedly *the same*. For that to whomsoever GOD *gives* AUTHORITY *in Controversies of Faith*, he gives also INFALLIBILITY, incontestibly appears hence, *viz.* that else a Man might really have *Authority* from the GOD *of Truth* to *lead Men into* ERROR, he might have a Power, a Right from Heaven *to seduce* and *to deceive*. The Absurdity of which glares at first View, and needs no further to be exposed.

To talk therefore " of the Church's *limited* Au-
" thority to decide Controversies *according to the*
" *Rule of Scripture and universal Tradition*; and
" that these Decisions (so long as they evidently
" contradict not that Rule) oblige her Members to
" Obedience,"——is quite trifling and beneath the Character of a rational Divine: For WHO, I pray, *is to judge* whether the Church's Decisions *are*, or *are not*, according to the *Rule of Scripture* and *universal Tradition*. — The Church herself,— or her Members? If the Church *herself*, and not *her Members*; then the Authority is *absolute*, a *Popish* Tyranny is erected, and a blind *unlimited* Obedience takes Place. But if *the Members* are THEMSELVES *to judge*, and no further to yield Obedience than they THEMSELVES see the Decisions to be according to the *Rule of Scripture*, then all *Authority* is overthrown; the Determinations of the gravest *Synods* are to be weighed in the Balance of every Man's *private* Judgment, and according as they *appear* to HIM to agree with Scripture or not, are absolutely to *stand* or *fall*. Betwixt *Authority* and *no-authority* in Matters of Faith, there is no possible medium: as for *limited* and *unlimited* they are only cant Expressions to which you affix no determinate Ideas; nor can pretend to tell the World.—*what limits* the Autho-

* II. Def. page 136.]

Authority has,—*where* it is circumſcribed,—in *whom* it is lodged,—and *how far* its bounds go?

Accordingly, you find that noble *Champion* of the Proteſtant Cauſe, when eſcaped from the pernicious Snares in which his Notions of *Church Authority* had at firſt unhappily entangled him, expreſſing himſelf thus,—"For my part after long "and impartial ſearch, I profeſs plainly that I can- "not find any reſt for the Sole of my Foot, but "upon this Rock only, namely, that the *Bible*, "the *Bible*, I ſay ONLY, is the Religion of *Proteſ-* "*tants*. I ſee plainly and with my own Eyes, that "there are *Popes* againſt *Popes*, Councils againſt "Councils, ſome Fathers againſt others, the ſame "Fathers againſt themſelves, a Conſent of Fathers "of one Age againſt a Conſent of Fathers of an- "other Age, the Church of one Age againſt the "Church of another Age,—in a Word, there is "no ſufficient Certainty but of *Scripture* only for "any conſidering Man to build upon: *This* there- "fore, and *this only*, I have reaſon to believe,—— "I will take no Man's liberty of Judgment from "him; neither ſhall any Man take mine from me. "——I am ſure that GOD does not, and therefore "that Men ought not to require any more of any "Man than this, *To believe the Scripture to be* GOD's "*Word, to endeavour to find the true Senſe of it, and* "*to live according to it**." – Theſe are the true Principles of *Proteſtantiſm* and of *Chriſtianity* to which *your* CHURCH muſt *neceſſarily* come back, if ever ſhe would maintain her Ground againſt the dangerous Aſſaults which *Popery* is making on her; for as long as ſhe ſtands hampered with that perplexing and unhappy Article (the XXth) ſhe muſt remain the Dupe and the Jeſt of inſulting *Jeſuits* and *Unbelievers*; and be content to ſee her Members led in Triumph away from her by hundreds in their Snares.

SECT.

* Chillingworth's Rel. Prot. Chap. VI. Sect. 56. page 379.

SECT. XIV.

Of the POSTURE *in which our Lord and his Apoſtles eat the* SACRAMENTAL SUPPER.

THIS is the only Point I ſhall at preſent further conſider. Concerning which I obſerve,

1. That it is moſt certain that they *eat it in their* TABLE-GESTURE, whatever that was; it was the *Geſture* in which they were wont to take their *Food* at *Meals*. This is *all* we need to know, to juſtify our Practice: Our Lord and his Apoſtles took the Sacrament in an *eating*, not in an *adoring* Poſture. Let no Man, then, think himſelf *wiſer*, nor pretend that he can take it in a more *humble*, *devout*, and *fitter* Poſture than THEY. And,

2. Though it was, perhaps, ſomewhat different from the Poſture we at preſent uſe (as there are ſeveral different Ways of *ſitting* in different Countries and Times) yet there was no Word in the *Engliſh* Language ſo proper by which to render ἀνάπιπτων and ἀνάκειμενος, as *ſitting*, which our Tranſlators, and I, after them, preſumed to uſe; for which I have fallen under your Rebuke.

"You tell me, page 148, that the Poſture was "*lying down or along*;" and yet juſt after, "that it "was *with the upper Part of the Body erect*; and "adviſe me to try how conveniently a Man may "eat and drink in that Poſture." But to *lay my Body down or along*; and yet keep its *upper Parts erect*, is a Poſition ſo extraordinary, that without the Help of ſome *Poſture-Maſter*, or your further good Inſtructions, I deſpair of ever compaſſing ſo arduous a Point.

That it was the Cuſtom of the Antients, both *Romans* and *Greeks*, to SIT at their Meals cannot be denied; ημεθα δαινυμενοι, *Homer. Odyſſ.*——And *Virgil*,

Virgil, who wrote near the Time of our Saviour, ſays,——*Soliti patres conſidere menſis* *. Æneid VII. The Cuſtom of *lying* or *leaning* at Table was brought in amongſt the *Romans* not till the primitive Severity of their Manners was corrupted by the Effeminacy and Luxury of the *Eaſt*; and even then, the Poſture of *ſitting* was retained in their *ſacred Feaſts* in the *Capitol* †.

And as for the Uſage of the *Jews*, Dr. *Lightfoot*, Sir, is an Authority which if, without being ſtrongly armed, you preſume to attack, the Blow will ſurely rebound, and hurt your own ſelf. But the learned Doctor aſſures us,——" That at other " Meals they either ſat, as we do, with their Bo- " dies erect, or when they would enlarge them- " ſelves to more Freedom of Feaſting or Refreſh- " ment, they ſat upon the Beds and leaned upon " the Table on their left Elbow. But on the *Paſ- " ſover* Night, they uſed this leaning Compoſure, " being the Poſture of free Men, in Memorial of " their Freedom.——And thus are we to under- " ſtand thoſe Texts which mention *John*'s lying " on *Jeſus*'s Breaſt, and leaning on his Boſom (*John* " xiii. 25. xxi. 20.) not, as ſome have pictured him, " repoſing himſelf or lolling on the Breaſt of *Je- " ſus*, contrary to all Order and Decency; whereas " the Manner of ſitting together was only thus; " *Jeſus* leaning on the Table with his left Elbow, " and ſo turning his Face and Breaſt away from the " Table on one Side, *John* ſat in the ſame Poſture " next before him, with his Back towards *Jeſus*; " his Breaſt not ſo near, as that *John's* Back and " *Jeſus*'s Breaſt did touch one another, but at " ſuch a Diſtance as that there was Space for *Jeſus* " to uſe his Right-hand upon the Table, to reach " his Meat at Pleaſure; and ſo for all the reſt, as " they

* Porro conſidere, non in lecto recumbere ad menſas heroicis temporibus morem fuiſſe diximus. Not. Delp. in Loc. & in Æneid. I. L. 702. † Valer. Max. L. 2, 3.

" they ſat in like Manner: For it is a ſtrange Fan-
" cy that they lay upon the Bed before the Table,
" one tumbling, (or lolling) upon the Breaſt of
" another *."

I have now followed you, Sir, much further than I intended to have done. I hope it will not be expected that I remark upon all the weak and indefenſible Things your *Defences* contain; there are, I believe, five Times as many as thoſe I have here noted; upon which it would tire the Reader's Patience, as well as greatly try my own, particularly to touch. As for the *Diſcipline* of the Church of *England*, its beſt Friends I am perſuaded wiſh, and common Prudence would have adviſed, that you had been *quite ſilent* on that *Head*. " Whoever
" thinks ſeriouſly (ſays one of the greateſt of your
" preſent *Biſhops*) of the Manner, Cauſes or Objects
" of our *Excommunications* generally ſpeaking, ſhould
" methinks in Pity forbear to mention the Word †."
Your *eccleſiaſtical Courts*, to whom that Diſcipline is committed, are juſtly not only reckoned, but called amongſt yourſelves, *the very Dregs of your Conſtitution*. And upon your own honeſt Confeſſion of the *ſcandalous* and *ruined* State in which *Church-diſcipline* lies amongſt you (quoted pages 67, 68, of my ſecond Letter) I am well content to let that Matter reſt.

As for the *perſecuting* and *dividing* Spirit the Church of *England* has ſhewn, I think it the eaſieſt of all Points (and ſo, I believe, does every one who knows its real Hiſtory) to ſupport with abundant Evidence the Charges on this Head. But as both *Churchmen* and *Diſſenters*, 'tis hoped, are now growing into a better Spirit, and their common Intereſt as *Britons*, as *Proteſtants*, and as *Chriſtians*, calls

* Lightfoot's Temp. Serv. Chap. xiii. Vid. alſo Rainold. Cenſura de Libris Apoc. Prælect. 79. Altare Damaſcen. Cap. x. page 552.

† Anſwer to the Repreſent. pages 38, 39.

calls loudly for a ſtricter Union; I wave, at preſent, any further Proſecution of a Point which might rather tend to widen than heal the unhappy Breach. Upon your own Principles as to *Perſecution* alſo I forbear to remark, though moſt eaſy to be proved both unproteſtant and unchriſtian, the Merits of the Cauſe betwixt us being little concerned therein.

If *this Review* of the Controverſy, which your *Letters* have called up, ſhall be a Means of holding forth to both the contending Parties the ſeveral Defects of their *eccleſiaſtical* Conſtitution, and of rendering them more candid and benevolent to each other; and ſhall at all prepare the Way for a *Coalition* betwixt them, I ſhall think it an auſpicious and very happy Event.

"The Readineſs which, you ſay, my Lords the "*Biſhops* have ſhewn, and will ſhew, to come to "a Temper with their *diſſenting Brethren**," will, I doubt not, be very gratefully and delightfully accepted by them, and returned by a correſpondent readineſs to lay aſide all Prejudice (for Prejudices, I am free to own there, doubtleſs, are amongſt us) and to comply with any juſt and reaſonable Propoſals for the accompliſhing ſo important and valuable an End.

I hear it with great Pleaſure, if what you ſpeak is upon good Authority——"That if parting with "the Ceremonies, and taking away a few indiffe-"rent Things will cloſe the Breach, you are ſatiſ-"fied that it will not long remain open——†." And in return declare, I verily believe that if *ſuch Condeſcentions* as a great Part of our Governors both in Church and State would, I preſume, think not *unreaſonable* to make, were made to the Diſſenters, there would no unbecoming *Stiffneſs* or *Averſion* be ſhewn by the moſt conſiderable Part of them. May Heaven diſpoſe the *Minds* of all who have *Power* to further and help on this deſirable Event! *that with one*

* Dedic. page 12. † Ibid. pages 13, 14.

Mind, and with one Mouth, we may glorify GOD, and unite our common Zeal againſt a *growing* common Enemy; and may *receive one another, but not to doubtful Diſputations!* For if we ſtill continue to worry and weaken one another, there is Reaſon to fear leſt we finally be deſtroyed one of another. Theſe Things I recommend, Sir, to your Conſideration: and ſhall only farther ſay, that as I have not been able; and am perſuaded never ſhall be; to get you to ſpeak out, and openly and plainly tell us,—— *who* you mean by *the* CHURCH, "to which Diſ-"ſenters owe Subjection, which hath Power to de-"cree Rites, and Authority in Points of Faith; "and by withdrawing from, and rejecting the Au-"thority of which we are guilty of a dangerous "and damnable Sin——." Whether it is the Pope with his Cardinals; or the King with his Parliament; or the Archbiſhop with his Biſhops; or the Biſhop of every Dioceſe with his Dean and Chapter attending.——Nor will you ſo much as pretend to ſhew us the *Charter* which has veſted them with this high Power,——nor will ſay, to what Things, or how far it extends,——though theſe are *eſſential* Points upon which the Controverſy betwixt us entirely depends: You muſt excuſe me from paying any farther Regard to your Lucubrations on theſe Things. I have neither Time nor Inclination to diſpute about a Scheme which you affect to wrap in Obſcurity, and which you are afraid to lay open and avow before the World. I here therefore take my Leave of the preſent Debate. But though I chuſe not to bear you Company in the diſagreeable Employment of *groping in the Dark*, you will nevertheleſs believe me, Sir, to be

With unfeigned Reſpect,

Your very humble Servant,

A DISSENTER.

THE

THE

Diſſenting Gentleman's

POSTSCRIPT

TO HIS

Three LETTERS to Mr. WHITE.

SIR,

THE extraordinary Remark which introduces your *Appendix*—That Views of *worldly Intereſt* incourage and ſupport our *Diſſent* from the Eſtabliſhment—I ſhall leave to the univerſal Laugh of your Readers, for a Confutation; and paſs on to points of greater Moment in debate.——To begin with your *firſt*. Of CHURCH-POWER, *and in whom lodged*.

The Church of *E*———*d* claims, in her *Articles* and *Canons* * to have Power from GOD, to *decree* OTHER *Ceremonies and Rites of Worſhip*, and to *make* OTHER *Terms of Chriſtian Communion* than either *Chriſt* or his *Apoſtles* ever made or decreed; and *to have Authority in Controverſies of Faith*.

This high and important *Power* ſhe ſovereignly exerts: You, as her zealous Advocate, endeavour to ſupport her in it; and charge all the *Diſſenters* as guilty of a very crying and dangerous *Sin*, in

 not

* Art. XX. and Can XXVII, XXIX, XXX.

not ſubmitting thereto. The *Diſſenters*, I have told you, will readily own the Charge, and return immediately to your Church, if you will gratify them in theſe two moſt reaſonable Requeſts. 1. Tell them plainly, WHO, and WHAT *it is*, you mean by *the* CHURCH? And, 2. Prove it, to have *this Power* veſted in it by GOD.

Your Advocates for *Church Power*, I know, love always to deal in *Generals*; and will twiſt a thouſand Ways, rather than *explain* their Scheme, and be forced to *ſpeak out:* But you, Sir, being a Gentleman of ſingular Intrepidity; and affecting to do Things in, what you call, a *ſoldierly Manner*, when your late *Appendix* came forth, proteſting to treat expreſly of *Church Power, and in whom lodged*; I hoped to ſee the point, all Diſguiſes apart, openly and frankly handled; and that a certain Judgment might now be formed what your Sentiments were. But, alas, vain were theſe Hopes! Not all the Invitations and Provocations I have uſed, can draw you from the Darkneſs where you artfully lurk. Tho' the regard you owe to *Truth*, to *Juſtice*, to the *Souls* of your *Diſſenting* Brethren, and to your own *Reputation*, moſt ſtrongly obliged you to it; yet you have not, durſt not honeſtly and fairly tell us—WHO *the Perſons are* whom GOD hath truſted with this Power; nor have produced the leaſt Shadow of a *Charter* from Heaven, inveſting them with it.

In moſt manifeſt Contradiction, indeed, to our *Conſtitution*; our *Laws*; our *Articles* and *Canons*, to which you have ſolemnly ſworn and ſubſcribed; and even to your *very* SELF (as I ſhall preſently ſhew) you continue to affirm—"That this Power "is NOT AT ALL *in the civil Magiſtrate*; that he "hath declared and recogniſed it *not* to be in "himſelf; but is ſolely in the *Paſtors* and *Governors* "of the Church."—But when I once and again preſs and provoke you to ſay, WHO theſe *Governors* and

Paſtors

Paſtors are——Are they the *Archbiſhops*; or the *Biſhops*; or the *Deans* and *Chapters* of every Dioceſe; or the *Prieſt* in every Pariſh; or the Clergy met in *Convocation?*——You are four, and will not anſwer. No, if *Diſſenters* muſt have theſe knotty Points ſolved, let them ſeek it from other Hands.——

But what Idea, Sir, will *the Public* form of a *Scholar*, a *Divine*, a ſome-time *Fellow* of a learned *College*, arraigning us before its Bar as guilty of *high Crimes* in not ſubmitting to *Church-Power*; writing Tract upon Tract to perſuade and reduce us to it; coming forth with an *Appendix* profeſſing to treat expreſly *of Church-Power and in whom lodged*; and yet, with all this Parade, not capable of being induced to ſay——WHO *it is* he means by theſe *Paſtors* and *Governors*, to whom, under Peril of everlaſting Damnation, we are bound to ſubmit.

I obſerve, you rank yourſelf with *the Learned*, and claim *Precedence* amongſt them.——"*I, and* "*another learned Gentleman* *" (*Ego, & Rex meus.*) But will not the *Learned* diſclaim you; and treat your Lucubrations as an egregious Impertinence; who can thus double and evade, and meanly refuſe to ſpeak to the one ſingle Point, on which they all ſee the whole Controverſy turns? Muſt not all your pretended Charity, and Lamentation over our *ſtraying Souls*, appear to an high Degree ridiculous, and perfect Grimace? *Diſſenters* dangerouſly ſin, in rejecting a *Power* ordained by *Almighty* GOD: They profeſs themſelves ready to yield it Submiſſion, if ſhewn where it is: Mr. *White*, their pretended Friend, knows the grand Secret; but no Prayers can wreſt it from him; he is cloſe and demure; and leaves them to wander on, and ſin, and periſh in the dark.

But to examine your romantic Scheme, as far as Conjecture can pick it out.—The Church's *Paſtors and*

* Appen. page 37.

and Governors are ALONE *poſſeſſed*, you ſay, *of this Power*. By its *Governors*, 'tis preſumed, you mean its *Biſhops*; and by *Paſtors*, its *Prieſts*. Every Pariſh *Prieſt* then, (your *good* SELF, Sir, amongſt the reſt) and every *Biſhop* of this Land, is veſted with this *high Power:* viz. a Power of *decreeing* OTHER *Rites and Ceremonies* in divine Worſhip, and of *injoining* OTHER *Terms of Chriſtian Communion*, than either CHRIST or his *Apoſtles* decreed or injoined; and of *pronouncing* AUTHORITATIVELY *in Controverſies of Faith*. This, you will note carefully, is the *Power* in Diſpute betwixt us. This the *Power* which your Church exerts: This the *Power* you claim for her; and which you affirm is veſted *ſolely*, (if I underſtand your Scheme) in its Biſhops and Prieſts.

But, pray, give me leave to aſk—— How do they poſſeſs it! *ſeparately* or *conjunctly?* It muſt be one of theſe. Has *every Prieſt* within his Pariſh, and *every Biſhop* within his Dioceſe, a *Right* to exerciſe this Power, *ſeparately* and *apart* from others? Or, muſt they aſſemble in common *Council*, and by joint *Suffrage* and *Conſent* iſſue forth their Determinations; to which the Conſciences of all the Faithful are bound to ſubmit? Not *ſeparately* and *apart*, 'tis preſumed you will ſay, but in *Convocation* convened.

Accordingly, you lay, I obſerve, a mighty ſtreſs upon the CONVOCATION'S *Conſent* to the Act of Uniformity, and the preſent eſtabliſhed Forms; and ſeem to repreſent *this* as that which alone gave *Authority* to both; and that as long as this *Conſent* of the *Convocation* was witheld (as for a conſiderable Time it was) ſo long the Reformation "was a Mea-" ſure not quite *Canonical* nor *eccleſiaſtically right* " —That it was a going a little awry into ſome " *illegal* or *extra-legal* Ways——That the King's " Supremacy, on that Occaſion, was raiſed to an " *undue Height*, and ſuch as *ought not* to be drawn " into

" into Example at other Times——That moſt, if " not all, the Reviews and Alterations which have " been ſince made, have been made by the *Biſhops* " and *Clergy*, in, or by the Authority, or with the " Concurrence of the *Convocation* (your great Miſ- " take, here, you will preſently ſee) and if our " Governors ſhall at any Time think fit to ſubject " it, to any other Alterations or Reviews, you " will not ſuffer yourſelf to doubt, but they will " be made by *eccleſiaſtical* and even *ſynodal* Autho- " rity, before the *civil Sanction* be added to " them *."

The Authority of the *Convocation* is, I ſee, the *Phantom* that haunts your Mind, and has *diſtorted* ſtrangely your Thoughts, on this Subject of *Church-Power*. I will candidly endeavour your Illumination on this Point; as I have the Satisfaction to hope, I have, not without good Effect, attempted it on ſome other.

Before you had taken on you, Sir, to write about *Church-Power*, you ought to have known—That, by the Conſtitution and Laws of *England*, the *Convocation* is really no Part of its *Government*; no Branch of its *ruling-Powers*; has no Share of its *legiſlative* Authority at all. To be amply convinced of this, I ſhall lead you to Authorities which you will have no *Countenance* nor *Power*, however ſtrong your *Inclination* may be, to conteſt. To ſome great ones, in the *Law*, you have already been directed †, which you have (and with good Reaſon) *not* preſumed to diſpute. Turn your Attention, now, to ſome of your own *Biſhops*, the Ornament, the Supports, the Glory of your Church: Who were honoured with the firſt Rank among thoſe *Paſtors* and *Governors*, with whom alone you declare *Church-Power* is lodged.

A Gen-

* Append. pages 8, 9. † Diſſent. Gent. 1 Lett. page 10.

A Gentleman of your Erudition hath, no doubt, *heard*, at leaſt, of the Writings of thoſe venerable Names *Burnet*, *Kennet*, *Nicholſon*, *Hody*, and particularly *Wake*, your late excellent Archbiſhop, on this Subject of the *Convocation*.

A due Attention to their learned *Reſearches* on this Point, will effectually eaſe your Mind of the Errors it labours under. From the *laſt* of theſe great Perſons, I ſhall preſent you with a few *Extracts*, to ſet right your Miſapprehenſions as to the real Conſtitution and Nature of your *Church*; which you ſeem (excuſe my Freedom) extremely unacquainted with, and not at all to underſtand.

To root up, and deſtroy for ever, the dangerous Abſurdity of *two* independent Powers (i. e. the Power you are claiming for your *Paſtors* and *Governors*, independent of the *civil Magiſtrate*) the Wiſdom of our Legiſlature hath enacted and decreed, " by the Statute 25 *Henry* VIII. called the *Act of* " SUBMISSION: 1ſt. That the *Convocation* ſhould " from thenceforth be aſſembled only by the *King's* " *Writ*. 2dly. That it ſhould make no *Canons* or " *Conſtitutions* but by Virtue of the *King's Licence*, " firſt given them, ſo to do. 3dly. That having " agreed on any *Canons* or *Conſtitutions*, they ſhould " yet neither *publiſh* nor *execute* them, without the " *King's Confirmation* of them. Nor 4thly. By *his* " *Authority*, execute any, but with theſe Limita- " tions; that they be neither againſt the King's " *Prerogative*, nor againſt any *common* or *ſtatute* " *Law*; nor finally, in any other reſpect contrary " to the *Cuſtoms* of the Realm." Vid. *Wake*'s Appeal, &c. page 4.

The learned *Metropolitan* further informs you * —— " That Chriſtian Princes have a Right; and " from *Conſtantine* the Great, down thro' ſucceed- " ing Ages, have exerted the Right; not only of " exerciſing

* *Wake*'s Authority of Chriſtian Princes, &c. page 10.

" exercising Authority over *ecclesiastical* Persons, but " to interpose in ordering *ecclesiastical* Affairs—— " That when the *civil Magistrate* advised with the " Clergy about calling a *Synod*, it was not looked " upon as a Matter of *Right*; but that he often " called *Synods* without such Advice: And when " the Bishops have earnestly desired a *Council*, and " it has been refused by the Magistrate, they have " submitted, and not reckoned themselves to have " a *Right* to meet without his Leave——When a " *Synod* was resolved on, the *Prince* determined, " or allowed, the Time and Place of meeting, and " what *Persons* should come to them——When " *Synods* are assembled, he shews, the *civil Magis-* " *trate* has a Right to prescribe the *Matters* on " which they are to debate; as also the *Manner* " and *Method* of their Proceedings in them; and, " if he pleases, to sit in, and preside over them; " or to appoint his *Commissioner* to do it in his stead. " (Thus Ld. *Cromwell*, a Lay-Person, sat in, and " presided over the *Convocation* for the King, *Hen.* " VIII.) They cannot *dissolve* themselves, nor *depart* " from Council but by the King's *Licence*—Their " Definitions are *no further Obligatory*, than as ra- " tified and confirmed by CIVIL *Authority*.—That " the *Prince* is not obliged to confirm whatever the " Clergy shall think fit to determine; but has a " Power of annulling and rejecting what they have " done; to alter or improve, to add to or take " from it.——He denies the *inherent* Authority of " the Church to make any synodical *authoritative* " Definitions; or that the sitting of *Convocations* " is any Right of the Church.——And says, " that as even the King's *Licence* cannot give the " *Convocation* Authority to promulge or execute " any *Canons*, but what are agreeable to the *Cus-* " *toms* and *Laws* of the Realm; so he ought to

" ſubmit them to the Examination of his Council " *learned in the Law*; by them to be *adviſed*, whe- " ther they are thus agreeable, before he confirms " them *."

So that the *Convocation*, you ſee, are not ſo much as the King's *ſupreme* Council in *eccleſiaſtical* Affairs. There are *others* who are to judge *after* them; to ſit as a Check *above* them; to inſpect, controul, approve or reject the *Advice* they give the King; even his Council *learned in the Law*.

The Archbiſhop adds——" That as the King " has Power, without a *Convocation*, to make and " publiſh ſuch Injunctions as HE *ſhall think* the " Neceſſities of the Church to require and to *com-* " *mand* the Obſervance of them: So he may, with " the Advice and Conſent of his Parliament much " more, (i. e. I apprehend, he may *without*, much " more *with*, their Advice and Conſent) make " what *eccleſiaſtical Laws* he ſhall think fitting, for " the Diſcipline of the Church; and may alter, " correct, diſallow, or confirm the Reſolutions of " the *Convocation* according to *his own* liking †"

And finally, he gives a Liſt of a great Number of *Alterations*, *Reviews*, and *Reformations* in eccleſiaſtical Matters, which have been done entirely by SELECT COMMITTEES, without any Advice or Conſent of a *Convocation* (through all the ſeveral Reigns of *Hen.* VIII. *Edw.* VI. Q. *Eliz.* *James* I. and *Charles* I.) When the King having firſt appointed a certain Number of *Biſhops* and *Clergymen* (whether they ſhall be *Clergy* or *Laity*, or what Number of *each*, is entirely in *his* Choice) to conſider *what may be fit* to be ordered, then injoins it by his *royal Authority*. And adds (directly contrary to what *you* aſſert) That AFTER THIS MANNER, viz. by *ſelect Committees*, (and Acts of Council) the Reformation of the Church of *England* was in

* *Wake*'s Authority of Chriſt. Pr. &c. page 130.

† *Wake*'s Authority of Chriſ. Pr. &c. page 136.

in great Measure carried on, and its *most important Affairs* transacted *. And in his *Appendix*, No. VII. he presents you with a long Catalogue of *Canons*; *Injunctions*; new *Translations* of the Bible; *Articles of Religion* set forth; *Explications* made of them; *Examinations* of Ceremonies; *Homilies* composed; *Prayers* sent to the Archbishop; with Orders for their public Use; *Visitations* of the whole Kingdom, with an entire Suspension of *episcopal* Jurisdiction; (The *Visitors* were two Gentlemen, a Civilian, a Register, and only one *Divine*. *Echard*'s Hist. *Eng.* page 300.) new *Offices* of *Communion*; *other Offices* reformed; new *Catechism* drawn up, &c. &c.—— All done by *private Commissions*, or otherwise, out of CONVOCATION †. So that the *Clergy* in *Convocation* have not the least Ground to *claim* as a RIGHT *to be consulted* in any future Reformations or Reviews. If the Government shall indulge them with *Leave* to assemble, and to give their Sentiments on these Things, it is to be gratefully received, as a Matter of *Grace*, not of *Right*; and to be used with due Humility and Deference to the ROYAL *Judgment*; in which the SUPREME *ecclesiastical Wisdom* is by our Constitution declared, and by all our Clergy acknowledged to reside.

* *Wake*'s Auth. of Chr. Pr. &c. page 256. The King, says *Fuller*, would not intrust the *Convocation* with a Power to meddle with Matters of *Religion*, from a just Jealousy he had of the ill Affection of the major Part thereof; who under the *fair Rind* of Protestant Profession, had the *rotten Core* of *Romish* Superstition. It was therefore conceived safer for the King to rely on the Ability and Fidelity of some *select Confidents*, cordial to the Cause of *Religion*, than to adventure the same to be discussed and decided by a suspicious *Convocation*. *Ch. Hist.* Book. VII. page 421.

† *Whether?* And in *what Method*, our present Governors may think proper to attempt any further *Reviews*, I presume not to guess: But, perhaps may be allowed to say, That whoever knows the real History of *English* CONVOCATIONS; and observes the *narrow* and *bigotted* Spirit; the *petulant*, *censorious*, *uncatholic*, and *rigid* Temper, which has ever generally prevailed *there*; especially, in its inferior Members; will indulge but faint Hopes of *Reformation* from that Quarter.

By this Time, no Queſtion, Sir, you have an humbler and juſter Senſe of the *Power* of a *Convocation*; and perceive it to be no Part of our *Government*, and that it has no *legiſlative* Power or Authority in theſe Realms.

Your favourite *fantaſtic* Scheme, then, "of *Paſtors* and *Governors having the* SOLE POWER *as to Church-matters*; *and that the* Civil Magiſtrate *has* NONE AT ALL*," is really, you now ſee, of very *dangerous* and *important* Conſequence; actually ſubverſive of our preſent happy *Conſtitution*; wreſts from the *King* and *Parliament* an high Branch of their *Prerogative*; impeaches their *ſupreme Authority*; attempts to ſet up another legiſlative Power; and is a deep *Indignity* caſt upon our *Reformation* from POPERY, which was effected ONLY by the *Civil Magiſtrate*, your boaſted *Paſtors* and *Governors* ſtruggling vehemently againſt it. Are *theſe* the Returns you make for the Indulgence of that Government, by whoſe Favour you live at Eaſe upon the Labour and Sweat of others!———

The Times of *Hen.* VIII. *Edw.* VI. and Qu. *Eliz.* you ſay, were extraordinary Times, and the *regal* Supremacy was then raiſed to an *undue Height*. But, ſee how the Caſe ſtood, when the Church was in the Zenith of its Proſperity and Power! I mean at the paſſing the *Act of Uniformity* of *Charles* II. In the Preamble of which you have the Sentiments of the Legiſlature, and of that your *moſt religious* King, which recites to this Effect——"That the Book of "*Common prayer*, &c. having been injoined to be "uſed by the Statute 1ſt *Elizab.* and ſince that by "the Neglect of Miniſters, great Inconveniences "and Schiſms having happened; for Prevention "thereof, and for ſettling the Peace of the Church, "*&c.* the King had granted his Commiſſion to ſome "Biſhops and other Divines to review the *Common "Prayer-book*, and to prepare ſuch Alteration and "Advice

* I Def. pages 18, 19.

" Advice as they thought fit to offer. And that " afterward his Majesty having called a Convocati- " on, and having been pleased to *authorize* and " *require* them to review the same Book, and make " such Alterations as to them should seem meet, " and to exhibit and present the same to his Majes- " ty, for his further *Allowance* or *Confirmation*; and " the same having been done; his Majesty hath *du-* " *ly considered*, and fully *approved* and *allowed* the " same; and recommended to this present Parlia- " ment that the same shall be *appointed* to be used " in all Churches,——Whereupon it is enacted, " *&c.*"

See here, how poor a Figure *the Power* of your *Convocation* makes when shining in its highest Glory! The Clergy are *authorized* and *required* by the King to propose Alterations in Church-ceremonies and Forms, for HIS CONSIDERATION and ALLOWANCE, as *Supreme Head* of the Church. The King *approves* and *allows* such of them as he thinks fit; but in order to their having Power at all to oblige the Members of the Church, the King recommends them to his Parliament; who turn them into a *Law*. And thus only they acquire all their *obliging* Force. What, now, did the Clergy in all this Affair! but give their Advice. Which might have been taken, or refused: So Lawyers, incapable of voting in Parliament, are often *consulted* in forming and making Laws; shall they therefore set up for a Share in the *legislative* Power; and exalt themselves from *Subjects* to be *Rulers* in the State?

And when a most happy *Alteration* was, afterward, made in this Law, by the *Act of Toleration*; which so deeply affected the Forms and Ceremonies of the Church, with Regard to a great Number of the Subjects of this Kingdom, pray tell me! What Hand had the *Convocation* and *Clergy* in that important *Church-affair?*

And

And as Forms of *Worſhip*; ſo Matters of *Faith* are enacted into Laws, judged and puniſhed, entirely by the *Civil Magiſtrate*, without any Intervention or Aſſiſtance of the *Clergy*. By the Statute of 9th and 10th of *William* III. it is enacted,——That if any Perſon ſhall be convicted in the Courts of *Weſtminſter*, or at the *Aſſizes*, of denying any one of the Perſons of the *Trinity* to be GOD: Or, of maintaining that there are more GODS than one: Or, of denying the *Chriſtian* Religion, or the Authority of the *Scriptures*; he ſhall forfeit——be impriſoned, *&c.*——Here again, you ſee the Juriſdiction and Deciſion of the great *Articles of Faith* declared by Parliament to be in the *Lawyers*.

And as to the Puniſhment of *Vice* and *Irreligion*, the Statutes againſt Drunkenneſs, curſing, ſwearing, the Breach of the Sabbath, *&c.* ſufficiently ſhew that the Parliament and Common-law Courts have taken to themſelves the Cognizance of *theſe*. And what now becomes of your *eccleſiaſtical* Dominion and *canonical* Settlement for above 200 Years? When it has been, and might in innumerable other Inſtances be ſhewn, that the King and Parliament have all along claimed and exerted a *ſupreme* Right in Matters of Religion, Faith, Worſhip, and Practice. Your *eccleſiaſtical Courts*, indeed, are ſometimes permitted to take Cognizance of ſome of theſe Matters; but then it is to be remembered, 1. That theſe are the *King*'s Courts; to be held only in his Name. 2. The *Judges* in theſe Courts often are, always may, and (ſay many of your moſt learned Clergy) ought *ever* to be *Laymen*. And, 3. The King, whenever he pleaſes, ſtays their Proceedings; grants *Prohibitions*; takes Cauſes out of them, and removes them into his Courts of Common-law,—— What, now, is become of the *original*, *radical* JURISDICTION, which you claim for your *Paſtors* and *Governors!*

But

But to return to the *Convocation*,——Our excellent *Conſtitution*, you ſee, hath with great Sagacity circumſcribed its Power, and reduced it to a mere Shadow, or juſt nothing at all. Eccleſiaſtical *Synods*, from the famous *Council* of *Nice*, down to the not-famous *Convocation of L——n*, anno 1717. Sad Experience hath ſhewn to have been little elſe than the Peſts and Troublers of Mankind; Mints where pernicious *Errors* have received the Stamp of Authority, and been ſent out to corrupt the Church, and to ſet the World in Flames; and that, for the moſt Part, they have been *Conventions* of intereſted, ambitious, factious and angry Men; who under a fair Pretence of *Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*, have been driving furiouſly and foully on in Purſuit of worldly Views; and with an Affectation of being thought *contending earneſtly for the Faith*, have been only contending like the Diſciples, who ſhould be *greateſt among themſelves*. This the Wiſdom of our *Legiſlature* knew to have been the *Manner*, the *Practice* immemorial, of eccleſiaſtical *Synods*; and therefore guarded, with great Diſcretion, againſt the portentous Evil; denied them all *legiſlative* Power; ſubjected them entirely to the Authority of the *Civil Magiſtrate*; and thus hardly reſtrained them from throwing, as they have often done, the World into Confuſion; and filling the Church with everlaſting Debates.

And now, Sir, having thus laboured your Edification, in a Point of high Importance, where, 'tis certain you greatly needed it; by this Time you begin to ſee, not the *Futility* only, but the *Preſumption*, and the real *Danger* of your Scheme. That it is a Suggeſtion as *groundleſs*, as it is *ungrateful* and *ill-timed*, that our Reformation was not effected in a *legal* and *right* Manner. You, ſee, that by repreſenting the *Magiſtrate* as having no Power in *Church-matters*, you undermine that *glorious Structure*; betray it into *Popiſh* Hands; and ſubvert the very

very Foundation of your own admired Church: And that by laying ſo *eſſential* a Streſs, as you do, upon the *Convocation*'s Aſſent to the Act of *Uniformity*, by which the *Reformation* and the *preſent Church* was eſtabliſhed, you ſuggeſt to a crafty *Jeſuit* unanſwerable Matter to inſult and expoſe *both*. For, pray, the *Jeſuit* will aſk, How was that *Aſſent* of the Convocation obtained? Was it not by the Magiſtrates *depriving* the holy Biſhops; and *thruſting out* the Church's *Paſtors* from thoſe Seats, and from that Authority which GOD had given them therein? And can the *Aſſent* of a Convocation thus *packed* by the Magiſtrate, make that *legal*, *canonical*, and *eccleſiaſtically right*, which was before illegal, uncanonical, and eccleſiaſtically wrong?

Beſides, to talk of the *Convocation*'s ASSENT and CONCURRENCE, is Language altogether *unconſtitutional*, and has a great deal too *aſſuming* and *preſumptuous* an Air. *Submiſſion*, Sir, and *Obedience* is all the Convocation was *capable* of giving. The *King* may give his *Aſſent*, and either Houſe of *Parliament* may give their *Aſſent*, and thereby confirm and give Authority to any Act: But ſhould the Magiſtrates of a Country Town talk of FURTHER *confirming* it by THEIR *Concurrence* and *Aſſent*; which would they moſt provoke, your Indignation or your Mirth? And yet, the *Corporation* of a *Corniſh* Burrough, Sir, has, as much *Right*, by our Conſtitution, to talk of *ratifying* by their *Aſſent* any Law of the Crown, as the *Convocation* itſelf *.

And hence, by the Way, you ſee the extreme Vanity of your Imagination——" That the Civil " Magiſtrate, by ratifying the XXth *Article*, hath " recognized

* The *Convocation* never gave their Aſſent at all to the *Articles of Religion* in K. *Edward*'s Reformation. And all the Aſſent they ever gave to Q. *Elizabeth*'s (as far as I can find) was the ſetting forth the *Articles*, which was not done till *January*, 1563: Whereas the Reformation was eſtabliſhed by the firſt of *Eliz. January*, 1558. Vid. *Fuller*'s Ch. Hiſt. B. IX. pages 52 and 72.

" recognized and owned *the Power* to be not in " *himſelf*, but in *the Church* *"—i. e. as you are pleaſed to underſtand it, in *the Clergy*. By what Logic, Sir, do you make *the Church*, in that Article, to mean *the Clergy?* Are not the LAITY alſo an *eſſential* Part of the *Church?* Does not the very preceding Article, XIXth, expreſly declare they are? Defining the Church——*to be a Congregation of faithful Men*——But, would you impute to the *Magiſtrate* ſo tame, ſo abſurd, ſo ridiculous a Part, as publickly to *diſown* himſelf to have any *Power* in Church-Matters: Yea to *deny* himſelf to belong to the *Congregation of the Faithful!* Yes; with Aſtoniſhment be it ſeen, this is what you are not aſhamed openly to impute to him. " For the King and " Parliament, you ſay, have plainly *diſowned* any " ſuch Power, as we are ſpeaking of, in *themſelves*; " and recognized it to be in the *Church*, and no " body imagines that by *the Church* they mean " *themſelves* †."——But if by declaring it to be in *the Church*, they have *diſowned* it to be in *themſelves*; they have, thereby, alſo *diſowned* themſelves to be of the *Congregation of the Faithful*; for *this Congregation* they declare to be *the Church*, to whom *this Power* belongs. Beſides; this is ſuppoſing *the* KING to *diſown* and *give up* a Power which the whole Legiſlature hath ſolemnly veſted in him; and which every *Biſhop* and *Eccleſiaſtic* in the Kingdom (till the Time of K. *William*) did ſwear, that he believed in his Conſcience to be true, under the Penalty of a *Premunire*, viz. " That the King is " the only *ſupreme* GOVERNOR of this Realm; as " well in all *ſpiritual* or *eccleſiaſtical* Things or " Cauſes, as *temporal*; and that they will aſſiſt and " defend him in ſuch Juriſdiction and Authority."

See, now, the hopeful State to which you have brought the *civil Magiſtrate!* You have made him

* I Def. page 17. Appen. page 5. † I Def. page 17.

to diveſt himſelf of *all Power* as to Church Matters, and to recognize it to be in *you*, the *Clergy*. He is now, therefore, in all theſe Affairs, to be ſubject to *you* his HIGHER POWERS. You have Authority from GOD to make *Laws*, and to preſcribe *Rites*, which Kings and Parliaments are to obey: *To bind your Kings in Chains*, ſpiritual, eccleſiaſtic *Chains*—Riſe up, O ye Kings, to theſe your *Paſtors* and *Governors!* be inſtructed, and pay Homage to their *ſpiritual* Decrees! This Doctrine was the happy Engine, which hath often lifted *humble* Biſhops, to the *high* Places of the Earth; hath made *Kings* bow down before them, and ſubjected *Emperors* to their Feet.

Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, Sir, you are too ſagacious not to know, take in a mighty compaſs; and very naturally comprehend the *Principles*, the *Manners*, the whole *ſocial* and *moral* Conduct, of thoſe over whom theſe holy Paſtors are to *watch*. Thus the *Prieſts of the Church* have exalted themſelves, for many Ages, to be *Princes of the World*; and by Claims of *ſpiritual* Power, have hooked in enormous Shares of *temporal* Grandeur and Wealth. But, is this a *proper Time*, think you, to revive and to preſs Pretenſions of this Kind? Thank Heaven, that Darkneſs is paſſed! The Light of Chriſtian *Liberty* dawns glorioufly upon us; and expoſes all ſuch *fanatic* Claims to juſt Scorn and Reproach.

But——I preſs you no farther——You begin to relent. Having urged you with the Weight of your XXXIVth *Article*, which you have frequently ſubſcribed; and of your XXXth *Canon* to which you have ſolemnly Sworn; both which declare poſitively, *your Church Ceremonies to be ordained by the Authority of the* CIVIL MAGISTRATE; you are, at length, conſtrained to own their Force. But, without the Honour of retracting your former dangerous Aſſertion, "*That the Magiſtrate has no ſuch Power*

Power at all *." You are now brought to acknowledge——" That the Truth of the Caſe is, all our " Ceremonies, and Forms of Worſhip, are ordain- " ed, as they ought to be, BOTH by *eccleſiaſtical* " and CIVIL Authority †." Honeſtly ſaid at laſt! Well, if by *civil* Authority, then the Magiſtrate has *ſome Power* in ordering *Church-Matters*; which you have all along denied him; and then the Power is not veſted *ſolely* in the Paſtors and Governors, as with great pertinacity you have inſiſted it was. *Render then to Cæſar, the Things which are Cæſar's*; and lift not up your Heel againſt the Hand by whoſe bounty you are ſo liberally fed.

You are now willing, I find, to compromiſe the Matter, and to go ſhares with the *Magiſtrate*, in the Enjoyment of this Power; and preſume to talk of an " ALLIANCE, and of TERMS on which it " ſtands, betwixt the State and the Church ‡." This ALLIANCE, Sir, is a mere *Phantom*, conjured up by the Strength of a late warm Imagination, to preſerve at leaſt a *Shadow* of its loſt Power to the Church §. Neither our *Hiſtory*, nor our *Laws* know any Thing at all of it. The Nature of our *Conſtitution* utterly diſowns it; and avows the Church to be *not an* ALLY, but a SUBJECT to the State. No ALLIANCE ſuppoſes *Independency* in the Powers betwixt whom it ſtands. But, by the famous *Act of Submiſſion*, the Church hath reſigned all pretentions to *Independency*; and given up its Powers into the Hands of the State. The Truth of the Caſe is this. A few Centuries paſt, the Church was found guilty of a dangerous *Rebellion* and *High-Treaſon* againſt the State: Whilſt it lay thus at mercy, as a Criminal before its Judge, its Pardon and Life were given it, *upon the* TERMS of its reſigning all Claims of *Independency*, and ſubmitting itſelf thenceforward to

* I. Def. pages 18, 19. † Appen. page 13. ‡ Ibid.
§ See a late excellent *Comment* on WARBURTON's *Alliance*, &c.

the Will of the Prince. But behold! these *Terms of Submission*, you have now, it seems, refined into *Terms of Alliance*; and the Church from a *pardoned Criminal*, now claims to be a *rival Power*; and to have its Rights and Jurisdiction *independent* of the State. "*Our Ceremonies and Forms of Worship are* "*ordained by* ECCLESIASTICAL, *as well as* CIVIL "*Authority.*" But these, alas! are but Illusions which mock your heated Fancy; for *ecclesiastical* Authority, as distinguished from *civil*, you may rest assured, there is none. Ask your learned *Bishops*, and they will utterly disclaim it. Ask your able *Lawyers*; and they will tell you, that you incur the Danger of a *Premunire* by presuming to exert any one single Act of Authority of this Kind. Ask all the knowing Members of the *Convocation* itself, and they will answer with one Voice, *'Tis not in us*——AUTHORITY *we have none.* Yea; Ask the meanest *Novice* in the History of the *Reformation*, and of the *Establishment* of your Church; and he will presently acquaint you, that your *Ceremonies and Forms were* NOT *ordained by* BOTH *ecclesiastical and civil Authority*; but by *civil* Authority ONLY: The *Ecclesiastics* in Convocation, and in the *two Universities*, obstinately *refusing* to give their Concurrence; and even entering their very solemn and zealous Protest against it.

But, you are still harping that the *Convocation* at last *gave their Assent.* Pray! how did they give it? Not till they had been first *garbled* and *packed* by the Magistrate: All the *Bishops*, save one, exiled, imprisoned, turned out, by his Authority; and *new*, according to his taste, put into their Room; besides, the invincible Artillery of *Deaneries*, *Prebends*, snug and fat *Livings* played strongly upon the inferior *Clergy:* Many *Dignitaries* amongst these, also, being *deprived* by the civil Power. And, is it strange that the *Convocation*, thus powerfully attacked, made no long Resistance; but yielded, how-

however *reluctant*, to what the *Parliament* had done*? But their *Concurrence*, I must again tell you, whether *free* or *forced*, gave, and could give, *no* AUTORITY to the *new Establishment*; because, by our Constitution, they had not the least Grain of AUTHORITY to give. Suppose the Convocation had refused their Concurrence to that Act of the Legislature; would the Law not have had its Force? You dare not affirm it. Suppose, again, the Clergy had established any *new Forms*, without an *act of Parliament*; would the People have been obliged to yield Obedience to them? neither durst you assert this.

However, not to discourage good Beginnings, I will take you where you are——We are come, then, to this Issue. That the *civil Magistrate* has Power to ordain *Ceremonies and Rites of Worship*, and to make *new Terms* of Christian communion; and that the Things of this Kind which are done in the Church of *England*, are done, at least in Part, by CIVIL *Authority*. This is what you now grant. But the *Question* then returns, with unanswerable Weight upon you——WHO gave him *this Power?* WHAT *Charter* hath lodged it in him? Not, surely, the *Scriptures*; the only Charter of the *Christian* Church. For all the *Power* or *Authority* which the Scriptures give the *Magistrate* relates only, and can relate but, to Things of a *civil* Nature; and *cannot* at all relate to Things of *Worship* and *Religion*. This never can be contested, because the *Magistrate* was, at the Time, when the *Scriptures* were wrote, and

* Hear what even *Echard*, who was never suspected of *Partiality* against the *Church*, says——"Fourteen *Bishops*, twelve "*Deans*, twelve *Archdeacons*, fifteen *Heads of Colleges*, fifty *Pre-*"*bendaries*, and eighty *Rectors*, were deprived by the QUEEN. "But it was strongly believed, that, of the rest, the greatest "Part complied *against their Consciences*; and would have been "*ready* for another Turn, if the *Queen* had died while that "Race of *Incumbents* lived, and the next Successor had been of "*another* Religion." *Echard*'s Hist. *Eng.* page 330.

and for near three hundred Years after, *Infidel* and *Pagan*. St. *Paul*, therefore by commanding us *to be subject to the higher Powers*; and *to obey Magistrates, for Conscience Sake, because they are the Ministers of* GOD, *for good*——does not, in the least, require our Obedience to their Decrees as to *Ceremonies* and *Forms* of Worship; or, our *Conformity* to their Establishments, in Things of a *religious* Nature. No, St. *Paul* himself, and all the *Apostles* were very zealous *Nonconformists*. The grand Scope of all their Labours, their preaching, their Lives was to persuade and draw Men off from the *established Forms* of Worship; and to convince them that, in these Affairs, there was ONE *King* only, and ONE *Lord* to whom their Homage *alone* was due: Even JESUS, who by his Sufferings had merited this high Honour, and to whom *alone* GOD has commanded that, in Things of Religion, *every Knee shall bow*.

Here, then, I again call upon and provoke you to tell me——WHO gave the *Civil Magistrate* this Authority in *religious* Matters?——You are *silent*, and cannot say——Well, then, if by the Command of *Almighty* GOD, and by the original Constitution of the *Christian Church*, he hath *none*: then, the Subjects of JESUS CHRIST are under no Obligation to obey his Injunctions, in Things of a *religious* Nature; consequently are in no Fault in *dissenting* from established Forms; and consequently, your Censures of them, as *great* SINNERS for so doing are extremely rash and uncharitable; for which it becomes you, to be humbled greatly before GOD, and to ask Pardon of *Men*.

See, now, the unhappy *Pinch* to which you are reduced——If you say the *Magistrate* has Authority to decree *Ceremonies*, and *Forms of Worship*, to make *new Terms* of Communion, and to determine *Controversies of Faith*——you then sin against the undoubted *Rights* and *Constitution* of the CHRISTIAN *Church*;

Church; againſt GOD, againſt JESUS CHRIST, againſt *Reaſon* and *common Senſe*. But if you ſay that he has not, you then ſin againſt the Church of *England*, againſt its *Laws* and *Conſtitution*: You are a *Diſſenter*, at leaſt, in Principle; but, perhaps, have not *Fortitude* enough to ſacrifice, what you call, your *Snugneſs*, by profeſſing openly your *Diſſent*.

Having thus conſidered the former Part of your *ſelf-repugnant* Scheme. 1. That the Magiſtrate *has not*: And, 2. That he *has* the *Authority* which he claims and exerciſes in your Church: I ſhould now proceed to the other, *viz. That it is lodged in the Church's Paſtors and Governors.* But, here, to the Surprize of every attentive Reader, you content yourſelf with *aſſerting*, without paying him the Compliment of ſo much as *attempting* to *prove* them, poſſeſſed of this Power. The BIBLE, I thought you knew, to be the *Religion of Proteſtants*; and the SCRIPTURES, the *only Rule* of their Practice and Faith. But behold! a *Proteſtant*, a *Divine*, claiming an high *Power* for his Paſtors and Governors; a *Power* in which the Peace and Purity of the Chriſtian Church are *eſſentially* concerned; and yet not able, nor when called upon *pretending*, to produce one ſingle *Text of Scripture* in Support of this Claim.

I have pointed you to ſeveral expreſs *Commands* of the *ſacred Law*, which directly FORBID and CONDEMN this pretended *Power*; have ſhewn you, that *Chriſtians* are the LORDS *freed-men*, that they are each for himſelf, *to ſtudy*, and *ſearch the Scriptures*——*To examine and try the Spirits*——*To call no Man upon Earth* MASTER, and are not *to be called* RABBI, i. e. are neither to *acknowledge*, nor to *claim* any Authority over others in Things of Religion, *becauſe* ONE *only is our Lawgiver and Maſter, in theſe Things, even* CHRIST; and all Chriſtians are *Brethren*. That tho' the *Princes of the* Gentiles *exerciſe* DOMINION *over them*; *and they*

who

who are great, *exercise* AUTHORITY *upon them*, it SHALL NOT BE SO AMONGST YOU——What have you replied, Sir, to these plain and direct Commands: Have you so much as *attempted* to evade their Force? No: but with conscious *Impotence* stand still; and see this *Scripture-Artillery* demolishing the boasted *Thrones* of your Pastors and Governors, and beating down the *high Places* to which your Immagination had raised them, without so much as extending a feeble Hand for their Support.

From what has been said, on the Point of *Church-Power*, you see with how little Reason you plume yourself and Gentlemen of the Establishment, as the *only* proper Champions to encounter the Church of *Rome*——" Upon the Head of *Heresy*, *Schism*, " *Ordination*, *Tradition*, *Church-Unity*, and *Catho-* " *lic-Communion*, no Protestant is so well qualified " to write upon these, and so likely to do it to the " Conviction of a Papist, as one of the Church of " *England*; but, to be sure, not a *Protestant Dissen-* " *ter* *." What Protestant Dissenters can do on the *Popish* Controversy, the *Salter*'s-*Hall* Lectures will shew to their lasting Honour. And, in Truth, all your mighty Champions, *Chillingworth*, *Hales*, *Stillingfleet*, *Middleton*, &c. in all their Conflicts with the Church of *Rome* have been ever forced to quit *their own*, and to borrow *our* Weapons; and to *these* alone have owed the Triumphs they have gained.

Councils, *Fathers*, the *Church's Power to decree Rites* and *Authority in Controversies of Faith*—— are Armour in which no *Protestant* dares look a sagacious and learned *Jesuit* in the Face. No; but the *sufficiency of Scripture*, and the *Right of private Judgment* (OUR distinguishing and proper Principles) are the *only* Method of Assault before which the

* Appen. page 11.

the *Romiſh* Syſtem immediately falls. Theſe, Sir, if you know any Thing of the State of that Controverſy, you muſt know to have been *the Principles* upon which your own learned Doctors have defended the Reformation; and the *Principles* on which alone it is *capable of Defence*. But then you are to remember alſo, that they are *Principles* on which the Church of *England* can never poſſibly be defended; and which, if faithfully and duly followed, would have brought *Chillingworth*, and *Hales*, and *Middleton*, amongſt us; and would make every *intelligent* and *honeſt* Proteſtant, in this Kingdom, a *Diſſenter* from the eſtabliſhed Church.

For if *the* SCRIPTURE be, indeed, a *ſufficient and perfect* RULE; what becomes of your *additional Splendors* (as you are pleaſed to call them) and your *Improvements* upon Chriſtianity! What, of your Church's POWER *to decree Ceremonies and Rites!* What, of *Sponſors* and the *Croſs* in Baptiſm, *kneeling* at the Lord's-Supper, *bowing* to the Eaſt, *&c.* of which the SCRIPTURES, the *ſufficient* and *perfect Rule*, ſay not a Word. And if the *Right*, and the *Duty* of *private Judgment* be acknowledged; into what a Fume, alas! evaporates the Church's boaſted *Authority in Controverſies of Faith*! Your learned Doctors themſelves felt, and owned the Difficulty of the Part they had to act. And 'tis, really, pleaſant to obſerve; how, in their Attacks upon *Diſſenters*, *Councils* and *Fathers*, *Church-Authority* and *Church-Power*, *the Danger and Sin of Schiſm*, &c. are gravely muſtered up, and plied warmly upon us. But no ſooner does a crafty *Jeſuit* come forth armed, *cap-a-pèe*, with Weapons of this Kind, than away they are all flung! to our Quarters they retreat! Then, *the* BIBLE, *the* BIBLE *only is the Religion of Proteſtants*, and every Man is to *read*, and to *judge for himſelf*; then, not thoſe, who *ſeparate* from a Church, that impoſes unlawful (unſcriptural)

Terms, are guilty of *Schiſm*; but the Church alone is guilty in *impoſing* ſuch Terms.

A ſlight Attention will ſhew you, with how extremely *ill a Grace* a Church of *England* Divine muſt appear upon the Head of *Schiſm*, *Tradition*, *Church-Unity* —— Who by the TRADITIONS *of Men* (Sponſors, the Croſs, *&c*) hath notoriouſly made void the *Commandment of* GOD (to receive one another, but not to doubtful Diſputations*.) Who breaks, in a flagrant Manner, the UNITY of the *Chriſtian Church*, by ſetting up NEW *Terms* of Fellowſhip and Communion in it; and by caſting out ſuch as *Chriſt* receives into it: And who declares, before the World, againſt CATHOLIC-COMMUNION, by refuſing to admit any to the *two Sacraments* of Religion: except, beſides what *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* have ordained, they ſubmit alſo to ſome Rites which *themſelves* have ordained, as *Improvements* upon the Plan which the inſpired *Apoſtles* left.——And is this, now, a *Man* to encounter *Romiſh* Emiſſaries? Muſt he not go forth with infinite Diſadvantage, and feel his own Weapons turned violently upon himſelf? But, the *Diſſenter*, who ſtands faſt to his diſtinguiſhing and proper Principles (*ſufficiency of Scripture*, and *right of private Judgment*) at once beats them from the ſtrong Holds of *Councils* and *Fathers* (where *you* have been long aſſaulting, but not able to diſlodge them) and makes all their *learned Sophiſtry* fall before the ſacred Force of the BIBLE and COMMON SENSE. And hence it is, as before obſerved, that the Swarms of unhappy Proſelytes, which theſe Seducers are ſaid to make, are *all* drawn from *your*, not *one*, that I have ever heard of, from *our* Churches: Your Doctrines and Forms too naturally preparing them to take that fatal Step.

But

* Rom. xiv. 1.

But it is Time that we now quit the Subject of *Church-Power*. I have treated it the more largely, becauſe it enters into the *eſſence*, and is the one ſingle Point, every Perſon ſees, on which the whole *Controverſy* turns. Your other two Points, the *ſacramental Teſt*, and the *regal Supremacy*, I ſhall diſmiſs in fewer Words.

As to the firſt, the *ſacramental* TEST——I perceive nothing in your *Appendix* which either *merits* or *needs* a particular Reply. Only becauſe you ſtill inſiſt, *that as the Law now ſtands, the Prieſt has a Power of repelling evil Livers, when they come to receive the Sacrament, as a qualification for a Place*; and by this wrong Apprehenſion, are kept from viewing the Affair in a Light ſo diſtaſteful as it really deſerves; I ſhall offer a few Things for your Illumination alſo here: Preſuming, when you ſee, that *you have not Power*, in that Caſe, *to refuſe the* CHRISTIAN COMMUNION *to the wickedeſt Man living*, you will groan under the diſgraceful Yoke; and for the Honour of *Chriſtianity*, and the Eaſe of your own Conſcience, will be the firſt to wiſh its Repeal. Now this is a *Point of Law*; and has been given againſt you, by the learned in that Profeſſion. And, if you attentively weigh the Caſe, their *Opinion* will appear grounded upon Reaſons of very great and unanſwerable Strength. Becauſe if the Prieſts has a *Liberty of* DISCRETION in this Caſe, it is then in his Power to deprive the *King* of the Services of his loyal and good Subjects; as alſo, to deprive the *Subjects* of ſome of the moſt valuable Favours of the Prince; yea, the *Prieſt* has then a Power to put a *Negative*, in many Caſes, upon the Nominations of his SOVEREIGN to Poſts of the higheſt Dignity and Importance in the State.

His Majeſty appoints a Perſon to ſome great Office in his Army, his Houſhold, or his Fleet; but *the* LAW forbids him *to Act* (at leaſt, but for a ſhort

Time) till he has firſt taken the *ſacramental Teſt*: He comes, therefore, according to *Law*, to qualify for his Place. No, Sir, anſwers the Prieſt; I ſay you are a prophane and wicked Man, a notorious *evil Liver*: I am authorized therefore by the *Rubric*, and commanded by the *Canon*, to refuſe you the *Sacrament*; and, be aſſured, I will not give it—— So here is the King's commiſſion the Subject's expectations, and the Officer's good ſervices, all quaſhed at once.

But can it enter into an Imagination ſo vague as even *yours*, that our *Laws* have put it in the *Prieſt*'s Power thus to bar the King's Commiſſion to a *General*, an *Admiral*, a *Secretary of State*. Gentlemen who too much merit, perhaps, the Character of *evil Livers* may, ſometimes, by the *royal Choice* be appointed to high temporal Offices; and may be capable of diſcharging them with great Advantage to their Country, and great Honour to themſelves. But, muſt the Prieſt's *Conſent* be aſked! at his *Diſcretion* muſt it lie! whether the Perſon, whom the *King* hath honoured with an high Commiſſion, ſhall preſume to proceed in the Execution of his Truſt! ——Yes, it really thus lies in the *Prieſt*'s Power (you will have it) to put a *Negative* upon the Crown. Without the Prieſt's *Approbation* of him, as being NOT an *evil Liver*, no Officer ſhall preſume, nor can be qualified by Law, *to act*.

I congratulate you much, Sir, that you are now even with the *civil Magiſtrate*. The *Noli Proſequi*'s and *Prohibitions* he has granted to ſtop proceedings in your *eccleſiaſtical* Courts, have been Matter of long Grievance: *Now*, you have it in your Power to make ample *Reprizals* on him. You have *now* a Power, *by* LAW, to judge *after*, *above*, the King. Tho' his Majeſty ever ſo much *wants* and *deſires* the Services of a brave Officer, YOU are firſt to *ſit in Judgment* on him; to conſider whether he is an *evil Liver*; and according as YOU pronounce concerning his

his *moral Character*, he ſhall, or ſhall not, be qualified and allowed to act——Theſe, doubtleſs, are the Days, of which bleſſed *Laud* is ſaid to propheſy! Who *hoped to ſee the Time, when no Jack Gentleman in* England *ſhould dare to ſtand covered before the meaneſt Prieſt.* The holy *Martyr*, indeed, died unbleſſed with the Sight. But, *you*, his Son and Succeſſor in Doctrine and Spirit, are taking bold Strides to reach *Piſgah-Top*, from whence to feaſt your Eyes with that *promiſed* happy State.

I might reſt the Matter here——and hope you are now convinced of the preſumptuous and high Nature of *the Power* you are thus, publickly, again claiming for *the Prieſt:* But, to ſilence for ever all doubts on this Head, I will preſent you with an *Authority* of irreſiſtible Weight. This is no other than the lower Houſe of *Convocation*, *Anno* 1704; ſtaunch Champions for the Church, you know, as ever honoured the *Britiſh* Iſle; in their Addreſs to the upper Houſe, amongſt *Gravamina Cleri* Grievances to be redreſſed, they repreſent——"The in-
" creaſing Difficulties of the parochial *Clergy*,
" about adminiſtring the holy Sacrament indif-
" ferently to all Perſons who demand it, in order
" to qualify themſelves for Office; becauſe they
" ſee not how they could, in ſeveral Caſes, act con-
" formably to the *Rubrics* and *Canons* of the Church,
" in repelling ſuch Perſons as were *unworthy*, and
" particularly notorious *Schiſmatics*, without expo-
" ſing themſelves to vexatious and expenſive Suits
" at Law *."——This was the *Conſtruction* which this learned Body of *Clergy*, you ſee, put upon this *Law*; but a *Conſtruction*, becauſe I had made it, which you, bleſſed with ſuperior Light, take upon you to pronounce——" *forced*, *unnatural*, *whimſi-*
" *cal*, *unequitable* †."——Happy 'tis nothing worſe!

But,

* *Tindal's* Hiſt. of *Eng.* Vol. III. page 686.

† Appen. page 20.

But, to conclude this Point——If, as the Law now ſtands, *the Prieſt has*, as you affirm, *a Power to repel evil Livers*; pray! what is the Reaſon that the *Rubrics* and *Canons*, which ſo ſolemnly oblige him to it, are not only, not *faithfully* obſerved, but moſt *ſhamefully* violated, and quite trampled under Foot? Why, amongſt the Swarms of *notorious* evil Livers, *Heretics*, *Blaſphemers*, and open *Unbelievers*, who continually come to the LORD'S TABLE, to qualify for a Place; do we never here of *one* rejected by the Prieſt? What! is there no Conſcience, no Integrity or Honour left amongſt thoſe who adminiſter this holy Rite of Religion! ſeeing the *Rubric* requires, and the *Canons* oblige to *reject* theſe evil Livers; and the *Scandal* of receiving them (both to *Deiſts* without, and to *Chriſtians* within) is ſo crying and flagrant; Why, in the *Name of* GOD, whoſe *Miniſters* and *Stewards* you profeſs yourſelves to be, are theſe *Enemies* to his Government, theſe *Aliens* from his Family, theſe *Deſpiſers* of his Son, never rejected, but ever tamely received, as *his* CHILDREN, to *his* TABLE——Why! but becauſe the Prieſt *knows* there is *a* LAW which hangs heavily over him, and threatens to puniſh with ſevere Penalty its Breach: And this being the Caſe, he chuſes rather to throw himſelf upon the Mercies of GOD, than upon the Indignation of *Man*.

And now, Sir, if with this dreadful and oppreſſive Yoke upon your Neck; whilſt ſcoffing *Infidels* laugh, and diſcerning *Chriſtians* mourn; YOU are eaſy and well pleaſed; and bleſs yourſelf, and your Church in the Protection of *this Law:* All I ſhall ſay, at preſent, is, that I envy not your Felicity; but heartily thank Heaven, I have neither Lot nor Share in this Matter. Only, hear the *Word*, which GOD ſent by his *Prophet* to certain time-ſerving *Prieſts*. *Ezek.* xliv. 6, 7. *Thou ſhalt ſay to the rebellious Houſe; let it ſuffice you of all your Abominations; in that ye have brought into my Sanctuary Strangers,*

gers, uncircumcised in Heart, to be in my Sanctuary, to pollute it; even MY HOUSE, *when ye offer my Bread ——they have broken my Covenant, because of all your Abominations.*

I have said too much on your *first* Topic, of *Church-Power*, to have either room or occasion to add many Things on your *last*, our *Constitution in Church and State*. Here, indeed, I observe with Pleasure, that amidst the shew you affect to make of confuting my Account of the *regal Supremacy*, and of our *Constitution*, you hardly, in one single Instance, presume to contradict it. My Account, Sir, was founded upon *Fact* and upon *Law*. After close Examination, I suppose you found it to be so; and therefore though, to save Appearances, you would seem to say something on this Subject also; yet in your whole 14 Pages, there is scarce the shew of any Opposition to what I had advanced.

As for the *Form of Speaking* in use amongst us ——*Our Constitution in Church and State*——That it is really an *impropriety*, as generally understood, I do not at all hesitate (with due Submission to the great Authorities by whom it is used) again to insist. It is a *Form of Speaking*, no doubt, drawn from the Usage of *Popish* Times; before the *Reformation* of our Religion took Place. For *then* there, truly, was a *Constitution in Church*, distinct from, and independent of, our *Constitution in State*. The Church had, then, its Laws, its Rights, its Officers and Powers, and its sovereign or supreme Head, *peculiar* to itself, and *apart* from the State. But, *now*, by the Reformation all that *Independency* and *Distinction* is abolished; it is now become entirely and absolutely a *civil System:* There are *now* no *Laws* in the Church (I mean none of *human* Enaction) but what were made by the *civil Magistrate*, and receive all their Obligation and Authority from him: There are now no *Officers* in the Church but what are constituted by the Authority and Direction of the *Magistrate*,

giſtrate, and are all liable to be unmade and deprived again by him——But that our *Conſtitution in Church*, is nothing really, but a *civil* or *parliamentary* Conſtitution; has, with inconteſtible Evidence, been ſhown in the preceding Letters; and and is a Truth, indeed, ſo plain, that no intelligent or ſober Member of your Church will, I apprehend, ſo much as *attempt* to deny.

Our *Conſtitution*, therefore, being now changed by the happy *Reformation*; ſo, doubtleſs, would this *Form of Speaking* too; but ſeems to have been retained for Reaſons of Policy, to ſooth the *Weakneſs* of thoſe who were then the *Weakeſt* of all the People, and the moſt averſe to the Reformation, I mean the *Clergy* *. With the ſame condeſcending Views, probably, it is ſtill kept in Uſe; but in real ſtrictneſs and propriety to talk of our *Conſtitution in Church and State*, is not only to put the *Body* before the *Head*, the *Effect* before the *Cauſe*, the *Handmaid* before the *Miſtreſs*; but it is to convey an Idea your Authorities could not poſſibly intend to convey, becauſe not founded in Truth, *viz.* That the *Church* has a *Conſtitution* diſtinct from, independent of, yea prior or ſuperior to, our *Conſtitution in State*.——By the Way, you will remember alſo, that the *Preſbyterian* Church of *Scotland* is as *eſſential*, *fundamental*, and *unalterable* a Part of our *preſent eccleſiaſtical* CONSTITUTION, as the *epiſcopal* Church of *England* can ever pretend to be.

My Account of the POWER which our Laws and Conſtitution give to the *Kings* and QUEENS of this Realm, in Affairs *eccleſiaſtical*; to inſtruct, over-rule, direct, controul, all the *Archbiſhops*, *Biſhops*,

* So becauſe 'tis ſaid——*The Lords Spiritual and Temporal*—Will any one therefore plead, that a *Biſhop* is of higher Rank than a *Duke?* 'Tis no more than giving a Lady the upper Place; or, according to the apoſtolic Precept, *honouring the weaker Veſſel*. What Defect of *Argument* does it ſhew, to lay ſuch ſtreſs upon a mere *Compliment!*

ſhops and *Prieſts* of this Kingdom, in all their *ſacerdotal* and moſt *ſpiritual* Concerns, *&c.* you do not pretend to *litigate*, but rather attempt to *vindicate* and *explain*. But you unhappily forget the one grand and material *Point*, for which it was introduced; and to which, above all other, it concerned you to ſpeak; and that is, to *reconcile* this Conſtitution of the Church of *England*, with the Conſtitution of the Church of *Chriſt*: And to ſhew that *Diſſenters* cannot ſeparate from the *one*, without the *Danger* and the *high Crime* of renting themſelves from the *other*. This was what you aſſerted, and flouriſhed copiouſly upon; but are now, I preſume, too well inſtructed to endeavour to ſupport. You now ſee them, Sir, to be two *diſtinct* and quite *different* Societies: And will be henceforward eaſed of thoſe *painful* Commiſerations over the Souls of your *Diſſenting* Brethren, with which your generous Mind laboured; and be terrified no more with direful Apprehenſions on Account of our *Schiſm*, which ſeem all your Life long to have *held you in Bondage*.

There is a little *unhappy Slip* which, tho' not quite in Place, I ſhall take Notice of here——In *page* 13. of your *Appendix*, you charge me "with "*falſe Play* in citing your XXXIVth *Article*, as *de*- "*claring expreſly that your Church Ceremonies were* "*ordained by the Civil Magiſtrate*. And aſk me—— "Did you find there any ſuch Words?" And yet, with agreeable Surprize, I find you either ſo uncautious, or ſo honeſt, as within a few Lines, to cite the very Words of the *Article*, which ſupport, in the ſtrongeſt Manner, the Senſe I had given; where *an open and wilful Violation of theſe Ceremonies is*, by the Article, declared *to be an hurting the Authority of the* CIVIL MAGISTRATE. Can a Violation of theſe Ceremonies violate the *Magiſtrate*'s Authority, if by *his Authority* they had not been *ordained?*

But these are small Matters, in Comparison with what follows. The Affair of Mr. *Whiston* I thought you would gladly have let sleep. The Case, to be sure, wrung much: You have been once and again flinging to rid yourself of it; but the Manner in which you now do it, rather solely wounds, than gives you Relief. "You tax me with *Misrepre-* "*sentation*, and with no mean Talent that Way *." Yea, have the Courage to confront me, with a Citation from Bp. *Burnet* to whom I had referred, as supporting my Account. But what will the World say, Sir! How will all your *Friends*, if not your *Heart*, reproach you! and the *Learned*, amongst whom you rank, hold you in great Derision! When they see you undertaking to give the Public an Account of his Lordship's *History* of that Case; but, either carelessly overlooking, or wilfully suppressing, the *material* and *important* Passages, which clearly and irrefragably support my Account.

"His Lordship, say you, † reports it thus—— "That it seeming doubtful, whether the Convo- "cation could, in the first Instance, proceed against "a Man for Heresy; and it being certain that their "Proceedings, if not warranted by Law, might "involve them in a *Premunire*, the upper House, "in an Address, *prayed the Queen to ask the Opinion* "*of the Judges, and such others as she thought fit*, "concerning these Doubts, that they might know "how the Law stood in this Matter." Here you stop short with the *Bishop*'s Narration: Having either not *Patience* to read, or not *Honesty* to write further; and then, with flourish, ask—— "Will "these Accounts now authorize you to represent, "as you do, *the two Houses of Convocation*, as waiting "upon her Majesty; and that too to be instructed "by *her*, and to learn *her Judgment*; and not that "neither, how the Law stood in Relation to their "Proceedings, but how the Gospel stood in Rela- "tion

* Appen. page 39. † Appen. page 38.

" tion to the Opinions of Mr. *Whiſton*, and the " Myſtery of the Trinity? And do you not now " perceive your Miſrepreſentation of the Caſe, and " that I did not *talk without Book*, when I ſpeak of " it as a *Specimen* of your Talent, which, indeed, " is not mean that Way."

There is one Thing I here perceive, Sir; which is, that if you do not *talk without Book*, yet when *the Book is before you*, you either want *Capacity* or *Integrity* to make a proper Uſe of it. For beſides the *partial* and *maimed* Account which you have given of this Matter, his Lordſhip expreſly adds the *important Paſſages* which follow; whence the *Public* will pleaſe to obſerve, with how little *Fairneſs* and *Truth* you treat this famous Caſe; and how great is both the *Church*'s and *my own* Infelicity; ſhe in having an *Advocate*, and I an *Opponent*, capable of ſuch diſhonourable and low Methods of Defence.

His Lordſhip ſays——" That by the Act of 1ſt " of *Elizabeth*, which defined what ſhould be " judged Hereſy, *that Judgment* was declared to be " in the CROWN——The Biſhops in Convocation " drew out ſeveral Propoſitions from Mr. *Whiſton*'s " Books, which ſeemed plainly to be reviving of " *Arianiſm*, and *cenſured* them as ſuch. The lower " Houſe (excepting to one Propoſition) *cenſured* " them in the ſame Manner. This the *Archbiſhop*, " being then diſabled by the Gout, ſent by One of " the *Biſhops* to the QUEEN, *for her Aſſent (Page* " 1194, *Approbation)* who promiſed to CONSIDER " OF IT. At their (the Convocation's) Meeting " next Winter, no Anſwer being come from the " QUEEN, *two* BISHOPS were ſent to ASK *it*, and " *to receive* her Majeſty's *Pleaſure* in it; but *She* " could not tell what was become of the Paper the " *Archbiſhop* had ſent her. So an Extract of the " *Cenſure* was again ſent to her; but ſhe THOUGHT " NOT FIT to ſend *any Anſwer* to it. So *Whiſton*'s

" Affair ſlept, and all further Proceedings againſt " him were ſtopped, *ſince the* QUEEN *did not* CONFIRM the Step that we had made; tho' he after- " ward publiſhed a large Work in four Volumes " Octavo *."

Here let it be noted. 1. The *Judgment* of what is, or is not to be treated as *Hereſy*, is, by our *apoſtolick* Conſtitution lodged *wholly* in *the* CROWN. *The* QUEEN, when ſuch wears it, is the *proper*, the *ſole* Judge, what Doctrines and Books ſhall be *cenſured* as HERETICAL: What Principles and Tenets are, or are not, contrary to the holy *orthodox* Faith.

Note 2. The *two Houſes* having extracted ſeveral Paſſages from Mr. *Whiſton*'s Books, and *cenſured* them as *heretical* †; deputed firſt *one*, then *two* Biſhops to wait upon *the* QUEEN, to ASK *her Approbation and Aſſent, to receive her Majeſty's Pleaſure in this Affair*; and to deſire her *Confirmation*, without which, their *Cenſure* was not of the leaſt Signification or Validity in the Church.

3. Upon the Receipt of this Requeſt *the* QUEEN, as *ſole* Judge, promiſed to CONSIDER *of it*. The Affair was of great Importance, *viz.* " What " the primitive *apoſtolic* Doctrine was concerning " the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Nature* and *Generation of* " *the* Logos? Whether there were *three* Perſons " exiſting in *one* undivided Subſtance: Or, whe- " ther the *Logos* was diſtinct in Eſſence from the " Father; not created, nor made, but in an ineffable Manner, begotten from Eternity? And, " finally

* *Burnet*'s Hiſt. of his Times, Vol. VI. pages 1133, 34, 35, 94. Edit. 12mo.

† The *Archbiſhops* and *Biſhops* in their Addreſs to the *Queen*, ſay, that Mr. *Whiſton* had advanced *ſeveral* DAMNABLE *and* BLASPHEMOUS *Aſſertions againſt the Doctrine and Worſhip of the ever bleſſed Trinity:* And, in their *Cenſure, they earneſtly beſeech all Chriſtian People, by the Mercies of* CHRIST, *to take heed how they give Ear to theſe falſe Doctrines, as they tender the Honour and Glory of our Saviour*, &c.

" finally, whether the *apoſtolical Conſtitutions* were " a genuine and inſpired Book; and a true Part of " the ſacred Canon?" Her Majeſty was now applied to, by her two Houſes of *Convocation*, and requeſted, as SOLE JUDGE, to pronounce *authoritatively* upon *theſe Points*, *i. e.* to tell them whether Mr. *Whiſton*'s Doctrine was to be received or rejected; to be conſidered as *Hereſy*, or not; in this Church. The QUEEN, as became a wiſe *Judge*, refuſed to pronounce *raſhly*: She took Time to CONSIDER *of it*; to weigh ſedately in her Mind the Merits of the Cauſe, leſt ſhe ſhould condemn the Innocent.

Note, *The Scriptures*, and the *four firſt general Councils*, are the Meaſure *ſet by Law*, to judge of *Hereſy*: Her Majeſty, therefore, being now requeſted by her *Clergy* to judge *authoritatively* in this important Caſe, acted a worthy Part in *deferring* her JUDGMENT, 'till ſhe had *examined* carefully *the Rule* by which ſhe was to judge.

Obſerve, 4. After *the* QUEEN had taken Time *maturely to* CONSIDER of theſe deep and myſterious Points, ſhe THOUGHT NOT FIT *to ſend any Anſwer*. Upon her *Majeſty*'s THOUGHTS, the Iſſue of this great Affair is ſeen abſolutely to depend. Finally, 'Tis worthy to be obſerved. 5. That her *Majeſty*'s THOUGHTS and JUDGMENT, on this weighty Caſe, were *quite* DIFFERENT from thoſe of her learned *Biſhops* and *Clergy*. They thought Mr. *Whiſton*'s Writings " contained *damnable* and *wicked* Doctrines, " and earneſtly beſeech all Chriſtian People, by *the* " *Mercies of Chriſt*, to take heed how they give ear, " *&c.*"——and judged them to deſerve a public and ſolemn *Cenſure*: Her Majeſty THOUGHT OTHERWISE. She did not THINK FIT *to confirm the Step the Convocation had made*. In Conſequence of which, their Proceedings *were all ſtopped*; and the *ſolemn Cenſure* they had paſſed with all their earneſt *Obteſtations*, *by the Mercies of* CHRIST, evaporate into Air.——This is a fair and true State of the Caſe——

What

What Improvements are here made, by the Wisdom of later Ages, in the primitive *apostolic* Plan! Behold *the* WOMAN now empowered, not only *to teach*, but *to usurp Authority over the Man*; over all the *Archbishops*, *Bishops*, and *Priests* of this Realm; to *vacate* their most solemn Censures; to quash and stop at once their *spiritual* Proceedings, in an Affair where *blasphemous Doctrines*, and *damnable* and *wicked Errors*, were bringing Danger of everlasting Ruin to the Souls over whom they watched! See here, Sir, the *two Scales*, that are to try Doctrines and Opinions in your holy *apostolic* Church: In one, is laid the united *Judgment* of all the Bishops and Clergy in *Convocation* convened; in the other, *the* QUEEN's alone: Lo, the *former* mounts, and kicks the Beam! The *single* Judgment of *the* QUEEN, in the Balance of the Church, weighs more than *that* of all the learned Bishops and Priests of the Realm!

And is not this, now, exactly consonant to the Account I had given? "Is not here, Sir, the very "comely and edifying Sight (at which you ex- "cept) * of the two Houses of Convocation wait- "ing upon the good Queen, to be instructed by "her Majesty, whether that Gentleman's Books "concerning the Trinity were to be condemned, "as heretical or not?" Do they tell us, "you ask, "of the Synod laying their Censure before the "Queen, to have their Judgment upon it?" Yes— "And of their waiting upon a WOMAN, who "could be supposed to know as little of this Mat- "ter as of the Motion of the Stars, to learn *from* "*her Mouth*, what the Church is to believe, and "what to reject, as to this great Mystery of Faith?" Yes; you see, with your own Eyes, that this is really the Case. Why Sir, will you constrain me to expatiate upon Things which reflect no Honour upon the Church; and by a rash and indiscreet

* Appen. page 37.

creet Defence *hurt* the Cauſe you would ſupport! How much wiſer is the Part your *candid Brethren* are now acting, who like *dutiful* and *pious* Sons, are taking a Veil, and walking backward, to cover the Nakedneſs which has been too long expoſed to the Jeſts of ſcoffing Unbelievers *.

As your Letters and Defences breathe a noble *Compaſſion* to the *ſtraying Souls* of Diſſenters; the extraordinary Inſtance, with which you conclude the whole, ought not to be overlooked. You are concerned, it ſeems, " that I have read, and in ſeve-" ral Inſtances agree in Sentiment and Reaſoning--" with the Author of *the Rights of the Chriſtian* " *Church*; and appear to have much ſtudied and " profited by that worthy Author---And are ſorry to " find Diſſenting Miniſters and Gentlemen dealing " ſo much in Books of this Sort. So long as this " is the Caſe, what hope of a Comprehenſion! Or, " indeed, who would wiſh for it! †" I have read, Sir, and I hope profited by *the Rights*, &c. As you profeſs to have read, and I hope not without profit, *Bellarmin*, an Author incomparably worſe. As for *my Agreement* with THE RIGHTS, *&c.* as far as that Author agrees with *Truth*, with *Scripture*, with *Law*, you muſt give me leave to ſay (without augmenting, I hope, your Sorrow) that I eſteem it not the leaſt Reproach. Nay for once, Sir, if you pleaſe, I will make you my Confeſſor, and frankly own,

* See a Series of ſuch Exertions of *feminine* archiepiſcopal, paſtoral, *Authority*, throughout the whole Reign of Qu. *Elizabeth*; particularly, the Caſe of Archbiſhop *Grinda*; whom ſhe ſequeſtered, in great Wrath, from his *archiepiſcopal* Functions, for refuſing to obey a raſh and tyrannical Order of the Queen relating to Church-matters. Under this Sequeſtration he continued many Years. The two Houſes of *Convocation* preſented to the Queen a moſt humble and earneſt Petition for his Reſtoration, but could not obtain it. Vid. *Fuller*'s Ch. Hiſt. Book IX. page 120.—*Neil*'s Hiſt. Pur. Vol. I. pages 358, 374.

† Appen. pages 41, 44.

own, that in many Things I agree in Sentiment and Reaſoning with one far worſe than either *Bellarmin* or *the Rights*, &c Who this may be, you will ſee, *Luke* iv. 41. *James* ii. 19.

Diſſenting Miniſters and Gentlemen, I preſume, *deal in Books of all Sorts*, from whence they can gather uſeful Knowledge, and improve and enlarge their Minds. They have dealt in the Writings of the ſhrewdeſt *Deiſts* (Books much worſe than *the Rights*, &c.) as you ſee by the many noble Defences of *Chriſtianity* which their Pens have produced. Your—*dealing in books of this Sort*—is a Bugbear, which may frighten *Children in Underſtanding*; but Diſſenters, you ſhould have known, *have not ſo learned* CHRIST. They are commanded to *try the Spirits*; to *examine*, and *prove all Things*; and remember the noble *Bereans*, who are commended by St. *Paul* for *ſearching* carefully into *the Grounds and Evidence of Things* before they gave their Aſſent. And if this *Liberty* of Examination, and of ſpeaking and writing freely upon Subjects of Religion, be a bar to a *Comprehenſion*——very long may it remain! It is the Glory of *Chriſtianity* that it ſhuns not the ſevereſt Search: 'Tis *Bigotry* and *Error* only that love to hide themſelves in Darkneſs, and grow touchy and alarmed if you ſeek to bring them into open Sight.

We acknowledge, Sir, your Goodneſs in bringing down to our Underſtandings the Myſtery of CONSECRATIONS *of Churches and Church-yards*; and your kind Attempt to illuſtrate the Uſefulneſs, Edification, and Comelineſs of this Ceremony. There are ſome *previous Queſtions*, which I could wiſh to ſee anſwered, before we enter thoroughly into the grand Debate——As, whether you think the Apoſtle *Paul*, in all his apoſtolic Labours and Travels thro' the Churches, ever *conſecrated a Plat of Ground?* Whether any of the *twelve* Apoſtles, amongſt the *Mira-*

Miracles and *mighty Works* which they every where wrought, ever did this *wondrous* Thing? Whether the *Synagogues*, where our SAVIOUR preached; the *Chamber* where he inſtituted, and firſt celebrated his ſacred Supper; the *upper Room* where the Apoſtles met, when they actually received the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; the *Houſe* of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, *Nymphas*, &c. in which were *Chriſtian Churches*; had really any *other Conſecration* than *our Places* of Worſhip have? And yet, whether *theſe* were not as much the *Houſe of* GOD, and *Places of his more immediate Preſence*, as any ſplendid *Cathedral*, now conſecrated with all the Pomp of *ſacerdotal* Device? *

You appeal to "the Forms which Bp. *Andrews* "and *others* have uſed in their *Conſecrations*. And "aſk—What think you now? Is there any Thing "*ridiculous* or *ſuperſtitious* in all this?†" Yes; extremely much of both, if they at all reſemble that of A. B. *Laud* (the only one I have ever ſeen) when he conſecrated the Churches of St. *Catherine Cree*, St. *Giles*'s, and others in *London*. An intolerable Piece of *eccleſiaſtical* Foppery, ſufficient to have made a Popiſh *Cardinal* Bluſh, and which no Proteſtant can read but with indignant Concern! The Form has, in larger Hiſtories, been more than once publiſhed; but having never ſeen it in any little Tract, I ſhall beg leave to tranſcribe it, for the Edification of our common Readers. A ſtriking Inſtance of the *Danger* of indulging *human Invention* in Things of Religion; and which ſhews, into what Wilds of ridiculous Superſtition even

* You have forgotten, perhaps, the Doctrine of your own *Homily*, to which you have ſeveral Times ſolemnly ſubſcribed,— "That in *Tertullian*'s Time, 160 Years after CHRIST, Chriſ-"tians had no other *Temples* but *common Houſes*, whither for "the moſt Part they ſecretly reſorted." *Peril of Idol.* Part III. Page 159.

† Appen. Page 45.

learned Minds are apt to run, when they leave the *Simplicity of the Gospel of* CHRIST.

" The *Bishop* came attended with several of the " high Commission and some Civilians. At his " Approach to the West Door of the Church, " which was shut and guarded by Halberdeers, some " that were appointed for that Purpose, cried with " a loud Voice———*Open, open, ye everlasting* " *Doors, that the King of Glory may come in!* Pre- " sently the Doors were opened, and the *Bishop*, " with some Doctors and principal Men, entered. " As soon as they were within the Place, his *Lord-* " *ship* fell down upon his Knees; and, with Eyes " lifted up, and his Arms spread abroad, said, *This* " *Place is Holy, the Ground is Holy; in the Name of* " *the* FATHER, SON, *and* HOLY GHOST, *I pro-* " *nounce it Holy.* Then walking up the Middle " Isle towards the Chancel, he took up some of the " Dust, and threw it into the Air several Times. " When he approached near the Rail of the Com- " munion-table, he bowed towards it five or six " Times; and returning, went round the Church, " with his Attendants, in Procession; saying first " the hundred and then the nineteenth *Psalm*, as " prescribed in the *Roman Pontifical.* He then read " several Collects, in one of which he *prays* GOD " *to accept of that beautiful Building*, and concludes " thus——*We* CONSECRATE *this Church, and sepa-* " *rate it unto* THEE *as* HOLY GROUND, *not to be* " *prophaned any more to common Use.* In another he " prays——*That* ALL *who should hereafter be buried* " *within the Circuit of this* HOLY *and* SACRED *Place,* " *may rest in their Sepulchres in Peace, till Christ's* " *coming to Judgment, and may then rise to eternal* " *Life and Happiness.*"

" Then the *Bishop*, sitting under a Cloth of " State, in the Isle of the Chancel, near the Com- " munion-table, took a written Book in his Hand, " and pronounced *Curses* upon those who should

hereafter

" hereafter prophane that *holy Place* by Muſters of " Soldiers, or keeping prophane Law-Courts, or " carrying Burthens through it: and at the End " of every Curſe he bowed to the Eaſt, and ſaid, " *let all the People ſay Amen.* When the *Curſes* " were ended, which were about Twenty, he pro- " nounced a like Number of *Bleſſings* upon ALL that " had any Hand in framing and building that *ſa-* " *cred* and beautiful Church; and on thoſe that " had given, or ſhould hereafter give, any Chali- " ces, Plate, Ornaments, or other Utenſils: And, " at the End of every *Bleſſing*, he bowed to the " EAST, and ſaid, *let all the People ſay Amen.* " After this came the Sermon, then the Sacrament, " which the *Biſhop* conſecrated and adminiſtered " in the following Manner.

" As he approached the *Altar*, he made five or " ſix low Bows; and coming up to the Side of it, " where the *Bread* and *Wine* were covered, he bowed " *ſeven Times.* Then, after reading many Prayers, " he came near the *Bread*; and gently lifting up " the Corner of the Napkin, beheld it, and imme- " diately letting fall the Napkin, he retreated haſ- " tily a Step or two, and made three low Obei- " ſances. His *Lordſhip* then advanced, and having " uncovered *the Bread*, bowed three Times as be- " fore. Then he laid his Hand on the Cup, which " was full of Wine, with a Cover upon it; which " having let go, he ſtepped back, and bowed three " Times towards it; then he came near again, and " lifting up the Cover of the Cup, looked into it, " and ſeeing the *Wine*, let fall the Cover again, re- " tired back, and bowed as before. Then the " Elements were conſecrated, and the *Biſhop* hav- " ing firſt received, gave it to ſome principal Men " in their Surplices, Hoods and Tippets; after " which, many Prayers being ſaid, the Solemnity " of the *Conſecration* ended."

This, Sir, was the *Senſe*, and this the *Manner* of that celebrated Martyr and Governor of your *Church*, in this Buſineſs of CONSECRATION. And, what now think *you?* Was there nothing *Ridiculous* or *Superſtitious* in all this! You ſeem, indeed, to have not quite ſo *exalted* an Opinion of this Solemnity as his Lordſhip; but as *the Church* has no where (that I know) explained herſelf as to this Matter; nor *cenſured Laud*'s Conduct; nor preſcribed any ſet Form in which this Ceremony is to be done; any *Biſhop*, I apprehend, at preſent, is at full Liberty to uſe the ſame, and may now conſecrate a Church after the Manner of St. *Catherine Cree* Church. And pray! to whom ſhall I attend, as beſt knowing and expreſſing the *Church*'s Senſe in this Point, to the great Archbiſhop *Laud*; or, to the——Mr. *White*, ſometime Fellow of St. *John*'s College, *Cambridge*.

I have now done with your *Appendix*——There is another OFFICE of your *Liturgy*, alike liable to the ſevere Exceptions of all well-inſtructed *Chriſtians*, and to the Sneers of inſulting *Deiſts*, as any I have yet conſidered; and that is, your OFFICE *for the Ordination of Prieſts and Deacons.* This, if you call me forth again, I may more particularly ſhew. At preſent, I only aſk——Whether to your *ſober Reaſon* it really appears a *fit* Queſtion, to be put to EVERY *young Gentleman* that comes from the *Univerſity* for Orders to the Biſhop; *whether he truſts that he is* INWARDLY MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST *to take upon him this Office?* And for EVERY *ſuch young Gentleman* to declare ſolemnly *as in* GOD*'s Preſence, that he truſts that he is* SO INWARDLY MOVED. The *Gentlemen, and their Communication*; the Manners, the Taſte, and State of the *Univerſities*; you, perhaps, better know, than I ſhall pretend. Tell me then, *before* GOD, is their *moral State* SUCH that you can reaſonably think EVERY *Student* that comes thence, when he gets a *Title* to

a

a Living, and applies for *Orders* to the Biſhop, doth really *feel himſelf inwardly moved by the* HOLY GHOST to make that Application? How is it we are not afraid to *trifle* in an Affair ſo exceeding ſerious and important! Is it not coming too near to the Sin of *Ananias*, viz. LYING *to the* HOLY GHOST?

And when, kneeling before the Biſhop, he lays his Hand on the Student's Head, is it not a ſtrange ſaying——*Receive the* HOLY GHOST——*Whoſe Sins* THOU *doſt forgive, they are forgiven; and whoſe Sins* THOU *doſt retain, they are retained; in the Name of the* FATHER, *of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST, *Amen.* I make no Reflections at preſent: But only ſay: That to me it appears quite amazing, that, in an Age of ſuch Diſcernment and Freedom of Enquiry, *this Form* is ſuffered to ſtand. And, in the Language of your *Collect*, I very heartily pray——*That Almighty* GOD, *who alone worketh great Marvels, would ſend down upon our* Biſhops *and* Curates *the healthful Spirit of his Grace*, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Humility! aſſured, that this *Stone of Stumbling*, in the Way of ſagacious *Infidels*, will then quickly be removed.

But to conclude. I have the Pleaſure, Sir, to be perſuaded that your Mind is not *now* filled with thoſe *ſwelling* and *high* Thoughts of the Excellence of your *Liturgy*, as when our Correſpondence opened. *Diſſenters*, you find, are not the only Perſons who except ſtrongly againſt your Forms. Many of your learned *Clergy* have, in a candid and reſpectful Manner, and yet with a becoming Courage, expreſſed great Diſſatisfaction with them. What *Effect* their Attempt for the Enlargement of the Church's Bounds, and for a further *Reformation* and *Review* will produce; Time alone muſt ſhew. Upon the Foot it at preſent ſtands, the Church's Situation, to every diſcerning Perſon, muſt appear extremely *critical* and uncertain.

It

It is *difficult* to defend it againſt the crafty Attacks of POPERY on the one Hand; and, I think, actually *impoſſible* to ſupport it againſt the Aſſaults of INFIDELITY on the other. Betwixt theſe *two Stones*, is there no room to apprehend its being quickly *ground to Powder?* To the *injurious* Idea which many of your *Forms* give of the *Chriſtian Religion*, the unhappy Increaſe of *Deiſm* is, undoubtedly, in great Meaſure owing. And increaſe it further will, there is the higheſt Reaſon to believe, if *theſe Forms* which are the juſt Offence and Ridicule of *Unbelievers*, are not timely diſmiſſed. But, when thoſe who now boaſt themſelves the *Succeſſors* of the Apoſtles, and the only regular *Paſtors* and *Miniſters* of Chriſt, ſhall give Proof that they are poſſeſſed of a truly *apoſtolic* Virtue, and ſhall no longer *ſeek their own, but the Things of* JESUS CHRIST; a Review will be no diſtant, nor difficult Event.

In the mean Time, *Diſſenters* have the Satisfaction to reflect; that amidſt various Diſcouragements, they have, by their *Diſſent*, approved themſelves LOYAL to the only SOVEREIGN of the Church, and FAITHFUL to a *ſacred Truſt* committed to them by GOD, for which they muſt give Account. They rejoice in the *Review*, that they have entered their Proteſt againſt the *Impoſitions* and *Inventions* of Men; which have corrupted the *Simplicity*, enervated the *Vigour*, deformed the *Beauty*, and broken the *Communion* of the Body of *Chriſt*. And whatever raſh Cenſures they may happen to incur from the *Prejudiced*, the *Weak*, and the *Intereſted* now: They, with great Aſſurance hope, to be not only *approved*, but *applauded* by their JUDGE; and to receive, at his appearing, *Honour* proportioned to their preſent *Reproach*.

When, it ſhall pleaſe the *Almighty Sovereign* to awaken in the *Chriſtian* World a Spirit of *genuine* CHRISTIANITY——When *true* HONOUR ſhall prevail

prevail over *Cowardice* and *Temporiſing*; and INTEGRITY and TRUTH over *Falſhood* and *Error*—— When that ſlaviſh ignoble Principle, *that we are to conform to the eſtabliſhed Worſhip of the Country where we dwell, whatever it be*, ſhall be held in deſerved Reproach: a *Principle* that debaſes greatly and corrupts the human Soul; puts out its intellectual Eye; chains up its nobleſt Powers; robs it of its higheſt Glory, *viz.* the ſearching into *religious* Subjects, and offering to its CREATOR a *reaſonable Service*; in ſhort, a *Principle* that directly tends to baniſh every Thing that deſerves the Name of *Religion*; to drive all *Truth*, and *Honour*, and *Honeſty*, from amongſt Men; that will juſtify a Man's profeſſing himſelf a Mahometan at *Conſtantinople*, a Pagan at *Peking*, a Papiſt at *Rome*—— When this infamous and baſe *Principle*, I ſay, ſhall be treated with juſt Contempt; and Men ſhall be every where diſpoſed, to ſeek with Impartiality, and to practiſe without Diſguiſe RIGHTEOUSNESS and TRUTH— Then, Sir, will the Character of a *rational* DISSENTER be had in univerſal Honour. Then will ſuch appear to have been the only *conſiſtent Proteſtants*; the true Patrons of Chriſtian Liberty, Church Unity, and Catholic Communion; and the only Body of *Chriſtians* upon whom the Guilt of *Schiſm* does not really reſt; becauſe they open their *Communion* to every ſincere Chriſtian; and require *no Terms*, but what CHRIST and his *Apoſtles* have required in the Church. If you will not throw in your Lot, and ſhare with them in thoſe Honours; you muſt e'en take your own Way. However, reſt aſſured that I am, with due Affection and Eſteem,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

A DISSENTER.

FINIS.

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